



To the press

PATRICK GRAF
«MENSCH ZU SEIN»

SUSAN PHILIPSZ
«FROM THE BEGINNING»

20 February - 2 May 2010

Press preview: Friday, 19 February 2010, starting 11 p.m.
Opening: Friday, 19 February 2010, 6 p.m.

As a beginning to the 25th anniversary of Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen we are showing two exhibitions which could not be more opposite on a formal level with the young Zurich artist Patrick Graf and the Scottish sound artist Susan Philipsz. In terms of content one point of contact is the life cycle, which Graf makes a subject of with his playful installation whose visual impact is strongly contrasted by Susan Philipsz's calm audio work.

Patrick Graf creates new worlds full of fantasy and (black) humour in his colourful, wild paintings, drawings, texts and objects. With «Mensch zu Sein» («Being Human») he invites us into a space-filling installation, created for the Kunst Halle, in which we stride through a whole life, from birth to death, in fast motion. Here existence confronts us as a game in which we must collect points to make progress and in which we cannot make all the decisions ourselves. From the comforting warm placenta the visitor reaches the first phase of life in which he is cared for and pampered. During our schooldays we catch glimpses of adult life. However, we are only onlookers who must first pass through other stages of life before we may take part in the grown-ups' game. In our youth we are concerned with questions of our own identity while at the same time our choice of job looms: should we do a commercial apprenticeship, serve kebabs, work in a bank or as a farmer? In one of these professions visitors move across the market place of the exhibition, symbol for the middle of life and adulthood. After a phase as a pensioner we finally arrive in an old people's home and from then on we totter unsteadily towards death. In his life installation Patrick Graf plays with stereotypes which we have from life, people and occupational groups and shows us the limits of our freedom to shape our lives. The artist will mostly be present during the show, giving instructions for the game and using a part of the exhibition space as a studio.

Susan Philipsz's interest lies in the exploration of the sculptural values of sound as well as its psychological and emotional effects. Her sound works are characterised by intimate singing which appears to be more directed towards the singer herself than towards the audience. Besides public space she is now increasingly placing them in gallery and museum spaces because in such controlled environments silence and sound meet and can develop a greater effect. The delicate musical work «From the Beginning», which Susan Philipsz is showcasing in a room at the Kunst Halle, radiates an almost meditative atmosphere in its minimalist presentation. Three songs, in which voice and vibraphone alternate, are played through the loudspeakers: the ballad which announces the tragic death of Sergeant Howie, the innocent protagonist of the classic horror film *The Wicker Man*; John Cage's repetitive composition *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs*, which he wrote in 1942 with a text originating from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*; John Lennon wrote the last piece – from The Beatles' album *Revolver* – while reading *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* under the influence of Timothy Leary's commentaries in *The Psychedelic Experience*. Susan Philipsz spins a web of various cultural references to take up the theme of life and death in a subjective way. The vibraphone serves to emphasise the subject matter suggested by the lyrics: the

elegy-like sense of collapse when confronted with a change in consciousness. «From the Beginning» is reminiscent of a lullaby, the evocation of a dream to which one subjugates oneself from the cradle to the grave, over and over again.

Patrick Graf (*1981) lives and works in Zurich. In 2008 he graduated from the Zurich University of the Arts (Master of Fine Arts). He has so far had two solo exhibitions at the HAAS & FISCHER gallery: *The Ypsilonia Age* (2008) and *Der soziale Aufstieg* (2009). The artist has also participated in the following group exhibitions: *The Living Room*, HAAS & FISCHER, Zurich (2009/2010); *Kunst Zürich; Mahlzeit*, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich (2008); *Conrad / Graf*, Neustadtgasse 21 Raum für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Winterthur; *Festival der Künste*, Hochschule für Gestaltung, Zurich (2007); *20 Jahre Bildende Kunst*, Kunsthalle Zurich; *Vera Icon*, The Bad Gallery, Zurich (2006). The publication *Episoden aus dem Ypsilon'schen Zeitalter* (Edition Patrick Frey) appeared in 2008.

Susan Philipsz (*1965 in Glasgow) lives and works in Berlin. The most recent of the artist's solo exhibitions were at the following institutions and galleries (selection): *Here Comes Everybody*, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; *We'll All Go Together*, Highline, 25th St, New York; *Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie*, Berlin; *Alpine Architecture* (with Monica Sosnowska), Alte Fabrik, Rapperswil; *More Than This*, Juan Miro Foundation Gardens, Yale Art Gallery, Mallorca (2008); *Susan Philipsz*, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela; *Did I Dream You Dreamed About Me*, Mitzuma Art Gallery, Tokyo; *Susan Philipsz*, Art Statements Basel (2007). The artist has also recently participated in the following group exhibitions (selection): *Unmonumental*, The New Museum, New York; *Gods and Goods*, Villa Manin, Udine; *The Sea, The Sea*, Folkstone Triennial New Commission, Sydney Biennale; *U Turn*, Copenhagen Triennale; *Mirrors*, MARCO – Museo De Arte Contemporáneo de Vigo (2008); *Skulptur Projekte Münster 07*; *For Ree*, Marc Foxx Projects, Los Angeles; *Madrid Abierto*, Madrid; *Busan Biennale*, Busan (2007).

If you have any enquiries or would like further information, please contact Giovanni Carmine (carmine@k9000.ch) or Maren Brauner (brauner@k9000.ch).

Public guided tours

Thursday, 11 March 2010, 6.30 p.m.

Sunday, 2 May 2010, 3 p.m.

Art Lunch

Thursday, 15 April 2010, 12 a.m.

Guided tour with lunch prepared by Fawzy Emrany (Artist-in-Residence by Pro Helvetia in St. Gallen)

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Tue – Fri, 12 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sat / Sun, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.