

→ Tschumi Alumni.  
How art works? How  
culture works?  
Tymek Borowski, Maruša  
Sagadin

05 05 2018 — 21 06 2018

Press talk  
04 05 2018, 11 a.m.

Opening  
04 05 2018, 6:30 p.m.



→ We live in confusing and certainly complex times. In a common Europe so important for both countries, Poland and Austria are linked by a rich cultural life that draws on a specific and in part similar historical awareness and a tradition-based picture of the world that is built on that. How do art and culture work? What is the zeitgeist supposed to be? What contribution do the persons addressed by it make, which subjects are we talking about? And finally: How can an art and cultural institution convey these values and ambitions in the spirit of a productive exchange and good neighborliness? The artists Tymek Borowski and Maruša Sagadin offer several pointed answers to these questions.

The exhibition *Tschumi Alumni. How art works? How culture works?* is dedicated to the question of the combination and productive exchange of art and culture and possible options for their effect on the individual and society. In their works the artists Tymek Borowski (b. 1984 in Warsaw and lives in Warsaw) and Maruša Sagadin (b. 1978 in Ljubljana and lives in Vienna) reflect and question critically processes related to the exchange of information and data as well as traditional cultural relationships. Whereas Borowski's artistic roots are in painting, in his more recent works he has increasingly dedicated himself to digital formats as such video and animation. Sagadin, who works primarily with sculpture, refers to architecture in her works and questions its function and role in today's society.

The works of **Tymek Borowski** are a kind practical set of instructions explaining how culture and art are to be "employed," how one can understand them better—with a pragmatic goal of living "better." The simple metaphors used in the videos *How Art Works?* and *How Culture Works?* have the task of defining and revealing the mechanisms of the phenomena art and culture. The works on show here, whose making was preceded by solid research, revolve around themes that particularly preoccupy their authors, such as the meaning of producing contemporary art and integrating it into the context of other activities. The conclusions resulting from the works are, however, more universal. The aesthetic of these works and the radical method of simplifying the events described are the mirror image of the omnipresent trend to the optimization of all activities and processes. Borowski transitions fluidly from humorous optimism to devastating self-irony, as in the multi-part homonymous image *How Art Works?* in which he exposes his own strategy for giving the impression that he is a good artist.

In his most recent works Borowski, addresses the question of how digital information and data can be depicted visually in an "analog" way. This tendency is already evident in the portrait paintings seen in the exhibition. The artist does not produce a precise likeness of his models, which are often passed on famous celebrities, but rather defamiliarizes them powerfully—what remains is an abstract idea of what characterizes people and subjects and how they reveal themselves (or allow themselves to be revealed) in society.

**Maruša Sagadin** is showing a series of objects titled *Tschumi Alumni* based on architectonic forms—for example, window openings that look like fists punching the wall but that function in this context as the legs of sculptures. Nearly identical rectangular forms are stretched over them. The line between the basis (leg), which is

an object unto itself, and the life-size sculpture—much like the leg to the body, the individual to society, or architecture to the city—is blurry and unclear. The geometrically formed surfaces are polished to a shine and look almost like freely hanging pictures. Their color palette recalls the Washington Color School, Austrian Lilien porcelain, “political” colors, and pop culture. The selection of simple materials, such as concrete, polystyrene, and plywood of the sort found in a hardware store, herald the artist’s interest in everything that seems deceptive and strange. In her works Sagadin also refers to traditional architectural forms, such as the Dorian column or caryatids, and translates them into a postmodern, feminist context.

The artist arranges the sculptures, which are at the same time figures, in combination with the columns of the exhibition space. It seems almost as if the group of objects—as a kind of counterpart—were entering into a dialogue with the other sculptures and the specific architecture of the space. The sculptures seem to depict a group of people and are a metaphor for a person or marginalized group that is planted into the social skeleton of a city and its infrastructure. A city in which the main focus is on pleasure, consumption, work, and a cult of the body.

In the outdoor area of the Künstlerhaus—and hence in the public space of the municipal part of Graz—Sagadin has placed an oversized bench and as such usable sculpture. On the upper side of the colorfully painted sculpture *DORIS* are props such as lipstick and platform shoes, between which the passersby can sit and rest from the bustle of busy everyday life and calmly look around and perhaps talk to one another.

Tymek Borowski studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and works as a painter, screenwriter, and infographic artist. He has been a cofounder of several art collectives and galleries such as the online project Billy Gallery and the Czosnek Studio for Experimental Design. He has received the VIEWS Deutsche Bank Foundation Audience Award (2013) and the Polityka Pass Award (2016).

Maruša Sagadin graduated with a degree in architecture from the Technical University of Graz before switching to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and studying sculpture. In addition to some awards, she has completed a one-year ISCP Residence in New York in 2016 and was granted a MAK Schindler House research scholarship in 2009–10.

*Tschumi Alumni. How art works? How culture works?* has been shown previously at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Warsaw / Austriackie Forum Kultury (November 20, 2017–January 19, 2018) and is now being presented in expanded form at the Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien in Graz. The exhibition is accompanied by a supporting program and by essays on the online platform of the *KM–Journal* ([journal.km-k.at](http://journal.km-k.at)).

curated by Sandro Droschl



Tymek Borowski, *How Culture Works?*, 2015. Video.



Maruša Sagadin, *DORIS*, 2016. SPACE, London / photo: Tim Bowditch.