

Artists: Elisa Barrera, Harun Farocki, Angélique Heidler, Sarah Lehnerer, Alan Michael, Rosa Rendl, Sarah Schumann und Niklas Taleb

Venue: Neuer Essener Kunstverein

Exhibition Title: Soft View / Privatissime

Curated by: Moritz Scheper

Date: June 19, 2020 - August 23, 2020

Text:

...picture, which can be reduced to an ideological minimum: it must be a picture of something, and most saliently of someone; and if the sense of „picturehood“ is strongest when the picture is of a person, it is all the more so when the person pictured is a woman, that is, when it is a person who is always already – to use a term redolent of the 1970s – „objectified“. So, just as the „primitive“ abstract painting will tend to be (of) a square, though it obviously need not be, the „primitive“ representational one will be (of) a woman.

(Barry Schwabsky: „Picturehood is Powerful“, Art in America, December 1997.)

SEMI-CLOSE-UP OF GIRL BY GERANIUM (SOFT VIEW)

FINISHES WATERING IT – EXAMINES PLANT TO
SEE IF IT HAS ANY SIGNS OF GROWTH. FINDS
SLIGHT EVIDENCE –SMILES– ONE PART IS SAG-
ING – SHE RUNS FINGERS ALONG IT – RAISES
HAND OVER PLANT TO ENCOURAGE IT TO GROW

(Text on John Baldessari's painting Semi-Close-Up Of Girl By Geranium, 1966.)

In any case, it's a tension between a communicative visibility (one that can return the gaze) and an objective visibility that is unidirectional, and therefore between an encounter with explicit ethical claims and one in which such claims might possibly be elided. In both cases, the serious possibility is raised that, despite our humanist denials, the second kind of encounter may exert a more powerful attraction.

(Barry Schwabsky: „Picturehood is Powerful“, Art in America, December 1997.)