

Plasma

In German advertisements the mobile service provider O2 visualizes the density of its network with the effect of computer-generated air bubbles, to make the atmosphere appear liquid. I was immediately reminded of this very fascinating environmental transformation when I first heard about Slava Tsukerman's 1982 independent science fiction film *Liquid Sky*. The plot introduces a small, heroin-seeking UFO that lands on a Manhattan roof, where it observes a bizarre, drug-addicted fashion model and sucks endorphins from her sexual conquests'

brains. In my head, the scenes of the film were repeatedly mixing with the mind-engraving O2 advertisements possibly, helping the aliens to suck endorphins, much like how the gel between a patient's skin and the cardiac sensor helps to intensify its signal. In our current exhibition, liquidity, defined as a quality of continuous progression, flow, constant change, can be seen as natural and artificial at the same time. Scherben is proud to present an exhibition of Irina Lotarevich, Juliana Halpert and Joachim Bandau. We invite the visitors to breathe the air in between the works as if it weighs a lot.

The video works *Hushtape* (2020) and *Priest tape (You've got another thing coming)* (2022) by Juliana Halpert (*1989) are presented on DVD discs, played on old, Axion portable DVD players. In order to view the videos, visitors must insert the DVDs into the players and navigate their menus. Both videos stitch together scenes of Halpert's daily life, recorded directly on top of VHS tapes of instructional yoga videos. Halpert's footage fades in and out of Yoga with Richard Freeman (1993) and Yoga Breathing & Relaxation with Richard Freeman (1997); the natural noisiness of VHS smooths the cut between the new and the old content, just a flickering ascent and descent is marking the change. Freeman's relics of blooming New Age Culture are woven into Halpert's affinity for LA's flowing highway system with blaring radio music, still-life scenes of flowers, or herself on the phone during a quiet afternoon. The pastel-purple film studio and controlled commands of a yoga teacher, early edifices of self-care, are eroded by messier frequencies of everyday existence and the accompanying abolition. When she and her mother are recording each other simultaneously, or her painter-friend is filmed, calmly talking, next to his own self portrait, this very flow is caught in a glitch. Those, in their significance undefined, scenes stress the demand for identity. They mark the thin dividing between random use of her camera and directed cinematic content.

Irina Lotarevich's (*1991) exhibition *Refinery* (2020) exists of a loose body of work. The title suggests the employment of various narratives surrounding production and division. *Refinery* included two text-based works, which, through their presentation, gain a great objectivity. One of them is continuous, here the chronological sequence and the personal notation are reminiscent of diary entries. The series of terms in the other text seems to carry a poetic logic in their compilation and the instructional order of to-do lists in their simplicity. The compilations or stand-alone terms are keywords, their derivation can be repetitively discovered in *Refinery*. Both texts together function simultaneously as written introduction and as independent work. Their scripts entangle the fields of matter on which her artistic work is based. Three protruding fields are oil, data and subjectivity. *Refinery* incarnates those as a triangle, which reappears through liquifying and curing processes. The unpredictable applicability of those metaphysical mutations¹ across states of aggregation, forms

our mind and melts into it. It is most tangible in its appearance as heroic monster in mass media. The evolved version of *Terminator in Judgment Day* for example is exclusively embodied by a liquid metal-like material. This substance finds its way back together after it had to divide itself, like air bubbles under water. This quality of surface tension is reflected in the peculiarity of the tin soldiers which, in the row, frame the texts. As slender figurines in dresses, modeled after the only females in a set of soldiers.

Joachim Bandau's (*1936) body of work *Die Nichtschönen Werke* (1967-1974) are prevalently made with segments of store mannequins in combination with then-new industrial materials, coated with polyester and fiberglass and painted in adamantine brilliant finish. He aimed to manipulate the surface of materials to let them appear beautiful, and compares his work with lifting as plastic surgery to hide a rough interior, "behind them are the wrinkles". *Die Nichtschönen Werke* were made parallel to the space race and the growing importance of corporate identity in the design of mass produced products. The curve found its use in ergonomic interiors in industrial and business environments to guarantee the workflow and its evidence in the universal significance of rotational symmetry and aerodynamics². The two works in this exhibition, *Flossenfuss* (1973) and *Transplantationsobjekt* (1969), stand out as they are more rough and noxious, like film props from early alien movies.

Plasma shows works that underscore the proximity of art to the everyday life of the artist, in order to interrogate the effects of varying social conditions on the development of subjecthood. *Contend* enters and exits the legitimizing framework of art. The liquid aspects of the work are emphasized. Context plays its own role. What happened to Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* once his sister placed it in front of his house after he left for New York? It probably drifted away, down Rue Saint Hippolyte. "Attention is an aggregate of particles and once you name it, it is already gone and changed into something else"³

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1. Michel Houellebecq's describes "metaphysical mutation" in *The Elementary Particles* as "radical, global transformations in the values to which the majority subscribe", I used it to highlight the social impact of the entanglement of data, oil and subjectivity.
2. In the interview of Luigi Colani by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* "Sind Sie ein Kurvenstar, Herr Colani?", Colani reflects on his very direct witness of the emergence of a more rounded design in the late sixties. He also explains the influence of aerodynamics, on the design of everyday objects.
3. This citation by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe originates from his diary entries during his Italian journey, when he described the impression that the landscape of the Vosges has left on him, he was passing it in a carriage.