

Third Eye Butterfly

1.12 2022 – 18.2 2023

OPENING HOURS

Wed–Fri 13–18
Sat 12–16

Closed for Holidays
22.12 2022 – 10.1 2023

The exhibition *Third Eye Butterfly* brings together an extraordinary range of artistic voices working at the intersection of language, music and film including Nat Marcus, Luzie Meyer, Sofia Restorp and P Staff, to expand on the work of American filmmaker Storm de Hirsch (1912–2000), who is considered one of the key figures of the 1960s New York avant-garde scene. De Hirsch, who's artistic contribution remains largely overlooked within an institutional context, began her artistic career as a poet, and developed her film based practice through her understanding of language. Her work is strongly influenced by an interest in mysticism and occult practices, which is reflected in her exploration of analogue effects. Distinctive to her work is also the rhythmic interplay between image and sound.

The film *Third Eye Butterfly* (1968) which lends the exhibition its title, is a result of multiple visual experiments inspired by the diverse range of colorful and abstract butterfly wing patterns. Kaleidoscopic shots and superimpositions come and go in the image, in tune with the soundtrack's repetitive scheme, it appears as an attempt to translate the multi-color effect of butterfly wings into an expanded film experience. Intended to be projected on a double screen using two synchronized projectors, the film creates the illusion of seeing two butterfly wings animated by the flicker of the projected images. An eye, "the great Eye," appears several times in the center of an endless spiral framed by the words "Third Eye Butterfly." On this matter, the American theorist Casey Chanress explains that "the 70mm like effect of *Third Eye Butterfly* encourages the mind to work as a third eye by fusing the two side-by-side screens into a third meaning, just as Eisenstein caused the meaning of two juxtaposed shots to result in a third implied meaning."

By using rhythmized imagery that incorporates colors, stenciled shapes, and sound into an audiovisual continuum, de Hirsch evokes an experience which relies on the interrelationship of sensory modalities. Following this idea of a multilayered perception of the world and tracing the interconnectedness of language, music and film young international artists Nat Marcus (lives and works in Berlin), Luzie Meyer (1990, lives and works in Berlin), Sofia Restorp (1986, lives and works in Berlin) and P Staff (1987, lives and work in Los Angeles and London) were invited.

The idea of being transported into other states of reality emphasized by the pieces present in the show continues in the design of the conventional exhibition space of Mint and is characterized by the work of lighting designer Ines Bartl. Together with the curator, she came up with a concept for the corridors and places of transition for the light situations inspired by the color spectrum from *Third Eye Butterfly*.

In the exhibition, not only light is used to mark the places of transition, but also the medium of language emerges through various works to describe transformative processes: the audio work *Period Piece* (2021) by Luzie Meyer for example playfully explores the manifold meaning of the word period that is used to describe how bodies, language and time are regulated. Similar to Meyer's work, Nat Marcus who produced two new fabric pieces *The Velvet Sound (I)* and *The Velvet Sound (II)* (2022) which on their surface are layering graphics, paint and text as well as P. Staff's poems displayed on hologram fans, engage the idea of multiple, fluid meanings of words to talk about bodies that encounter themselves in transitory states. Sofia Restorp's newly created drawings, on the other hand, return to a purely visual world, but are thoroughly poetic due to the ambiguous surrealistic interiors that are depicted. Rather than dwelling on the surface her pieces can be characterized by the idea of a reflective looking inward.

Third Eye Butterfly can be seen as an attempt to reflect on Storm de Hirsch's psychedelic view of the world and how surpassing common notions of what reality is, is more relevant than ever to artists working in the here and now.

Curator: Cathrin Mayer

Cathrin Mayer (b. 1988 Vienna) is currently the associate curator at HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark (Graz, AT). Until 2020, she was curator at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin. In addition to her curatorial work, she teaches regularly and is holding a guest professorship for curatorial studies at The University of Art and Design Linz (AT).

Storm de Hirsch

Third Eye Butterfly, 1968

16mm film, digitalized, color, sound. 10 min.

Courtesy The New American Cinema Group, Inc./ The Film-Maker's Cooperative, New York

The filmmaker Storm de Hirsch (1912–2000) is considered one of the key figures of the New York avant-garde scene of the 1960s. Like many experimental filmmakers of the time, de Hirsch began her artistic career not as a filmmaker, but as a poet. She made her first film in the early 1960s and soon became active in the New York underground film movement, collaborating with filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, Shirley Clarke and others. Her films explored the possibilities of light and analog effects to create kaleidoscopic images inspired by the aesthetics of Far Eastern religions and rituals. Much of de Hirsch's work is abstract and uses a variety of experimental techniques, such as frame-by-frame etching on opaque black film stock and hand-painting on the film strip itself.

Storm de Hirsch (b.1912 Malkin, New Jersey, d.2000 New York) was an American poet and filmmaker. She was a founding member of the Filmmakers' Cooperative which was initiated 1961 in New York City. Often overlooked by historians, in recent years she has been recognized as a pioneer of underground cinema. Her films have screened at the Museum of Modern Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Cannes Film Festival; and the Ann Arbor Film Festival; among others.

Luzie Meyer

Period Piece, 2021

Sound installation, 3.29 min

Luzie Meyer explores how language produces subjectivity and identity. Her own artistic perspective often serves as a starting point to deconstruct authorship. Her writing focuses on the relationship between the body and language, the imaginary and symbolic, as well as between image and word. The audio work *Period Piece* (2021) presented in the exhibition reflects upon the different meanings of the word period as a category which regulates the female body, language as well as history and in a wider sense time. By juxtapositioning these various categories the artist reflects upon their meanings as socio-cultural authorities that govern our bodies. The artist's voice is heard to a very fast beat. The piece is characterized by different effects like intervals with drum beats or rhyming passages. Through this specific style the language unfolds here with a sheer power almost able to hypnotize its listeners.

Luzie Meyer (b.1990, Tübingen, Germany) is an interdisciplinary artist, writer and translator based in Berlin. Her videos, sound works, photographic installations, and performances have been presented internationally; Amongst others at the Kunsthalle Kunstmuseum Bremerhaven (2022); Istituto Svizzero Rome (2022), Sweetwater Berlin (2022), Kölnischer Kunstverein Cologne (2022), Pogo Bar Berlin (2021), FRI ART Fribourg (2021), Fanta, Milano (2021), Tarsia Napoli (2021), Efremidis Berlin (2020), Bel Ami Los Angeles (2019), KW Institute for Contemporary Arts (2018). In the framework of the DiGitaL Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program, she had a teaching position at the KH Weißensee Berlin between 2020 and 2021, where she hosted the seminar series "Situated Feminisms".

Nat Marcus

The Velvet Sound (I), 2022

The Velvet Sound (II), 2022

Gouache, silk screen ink and silk screen print on canvas

On the occasion of the exhibition Third Eye Butterfly Nat Marcus produced a new fabric piece called *The Velvet Sound (I)* and *The Velvet Sound (II)* which takes inspiration by juxtaposing the notion of fluidity which can be an element of water, music, language and the body. The artists writes about it as follows:

"I'd say water is the guiding element of the prints inasmuch as it represents the qualities of depth and flow. First, there are physical levels of paint, graphics, and text layered up on the canvas. The motifs themselves also reference a (fragmented) chronology, a volume of time: the center label of a Masters at Work record from 1994, an image of a woman standing on a shell, borrowing a form from Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, etc. On one of the prints, there's a text of mine written shortly before starting to take hormones and transition, describing a dream of being 'on the shore of my boyhood' – it was printed on textile in 2019, scanned and reprinted on this canvas in November. This notion of transition, in turn, has very much to

do with flow. The images and text are distributed and composed across the prints so that the works have no “right side up” – they can be hung and installed in any direction as a legible (albeit shifting) plane. The application of strips and bars of blue and greens as a top layer is also intended to create a kind of shimmer that lets the eye drift across the prints’ surfaces, not really foregrounding any singular element or subject (visual or thematic). The flow also speaks to a certain diffusion and blending of archetypal figures of oceanic femininity, without equating them: the mermaid, Aphrodite, Yemaya, Oshun, the moon. I approach these figures (no longer on the shore of my boyhood, but wading into a different element) by prayer, hormonal injections, and artistic practice (the prints are devotional objects in this way). But in the end, an ethic of honoring Yemaya (a major water spirit from the Yoruba religion which has its roots in Nigeria), and more generally the ocean, is one of surrender to tidal movement, deep currents. To be, as Storm de Hirsch writes, “in the center of the velvet sound” feels to me like standing in the endless drone of the ocean, in the middle of the great gyre of flux and becoming.”

Nat Marcus (b.1993 New York) lives and works in Berlin. She is a poet, designer, and co-editor of TABLOID Press, a publishing house and media imprint founded in Berlin in 2014. Marcus has participated in poetry readings and performances in a variety of venues across Europe and the US, and in the last years has exhibited visual works at Kunstverein München (Munich, DE), Villa Kultur (Copenhagen, DK) and Blake & Vargas (Berlin, DE). As a vocalist, she has collaborated with musical artists such as Perila, exael, Soho Rezenejad, and Ulla Straus. In addition to the collections of clothing Marcus silkscreens and releases under the TABLOID imprint, she has also provided designs for numerous record labels including Uzuri, West Mineral Ltd., Ediciones Capablanca, and 3XL.

P Staff

Eat Clean Ass Only, 2021

Ancient and Celibate, 2021

Mp4-video projected on 3D hologram fans

P Staff draws from a wide variety of inspiration, materials, and settings, including Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics theory, affect theory, the transpoetics of Che Gossett and Eva Hayward, as well as their own studies in modern dance, astrology, and end-of-life care. Staff’s interdisciplinary practice emphasizes the processes by which bodies are interpreted, regulated, and disciplined in a rigidly controlled society, particularly those of queer, trans, and disabled individuals. The two poems *Eat Clean Ass Only* (2021) and *Ancient and Celibate* (2021), on view in the exhibition, are presented on hologram fans a visual architecture used for advertising that conceals its material mechanism by spinning its blades so quickly that the text appears to float in front of the wall. They include damp and sexual images of jelly rubber dicks in showers, piss, sweat, saliva, tears, shit, grease hair and cum, flowing discharge and spectral corporeality that complicates its fixation in an image. Unlike historical technologies for erotic visual production (kinetoscopes or peep shows), holograms push their images outside the surface rather than pulling the gaze in.

P Staff (b.1987, Bognor Regis, England) is a filmmaker, installation artist, and poet that lives and works in Los Angeles, and London. Staff studied at Goldsmiths College, London (2009), and was part of the Associate Artist Programme at LUX, London (2011). Recent

solo exhibitions have been held at LUMA, Arles (2021); ICA Shanghai (2020); Serpentine Galleries, London (2019); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2019); Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2018); and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2015). Selected group exhibitions have been held at 59th Venice Biennale (2022); 13th Shanghai Biennale (2021); Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin (2021); 47 Canal, New York (2021); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2019); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018); New Museum, New York (2017); and Gasworks, London (2016) among others. They are the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2019) and the Paul Hamlyn Award for Visual Artists (2015).

Sofia Restorp

From left to right:

Foundation, 2022

Crater, 2022

Wasp in Jam, 2022

Encircled, 2022

Pastel on paper

Sofia Restorp, who has long worked in sculpture, has recently discovered drawing, as her new medium of choice. During the pandemic times, drawing provided a continuous artistic work for her, allowing her to sharpen an introspective eye. The objects Restorp depicts are commonplace and not precious, but the artist's whimsical way of combining them creates idiosyncratic works that do not pretend to have a fixed story or interpretation

Thus, in the exhibition *Third Eye Butterfly*, one discovers a deconstructed wasp next to a bowl of red jam, a pelican resting on a dead chicken, a tomato in a snow cave, and a shark as a piece of furniture. Although the artist left behind her work with sculptures, in the pastel drawings produced for the exhibition, one can trace the interest in the construction of elements and spaces. Restorp uses scenographic means such as the representation of spatial dimensions or shadows not with the intention of creating realistic images, but to add a dimension of absurdity. The hammerhead shark thus gets legs of a piece of furniture instead of its two rear fins. Such bizarre images arise for the artist in reflection with the absurd features that characterize our conflict-ridden present. At the same time, the artist is also interested in the individual interpretations of the viewers and the psychological dimension that lies in the works.

Sofia Restorp (b.1986 in Nora, Sweden) lives and works in Berlin. Her work is characterized by an animistic visual language where objects, animals and foods are used by their emotional and corporeal resonance. The worlds she creates derive from an ambition to isolate and amplify complex emotional states, in which taboos, grief and compassion sometimes are inseparable from each other. From having sculpture as her primary medium she recently transitioned to painting and drawing that is now the centre of her practice. She holds a degree from The Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm and Royal Academy Schools in London and her work have been shown at Rod Barton Gallery in London, Blue Ruin in Miami, XavierLaboulbenne in Berlin, Comedy Club in Berlin, Luleå Biennial 2020 and Low Rence in San Francisco among others.

CONTACT

info@m-i-n-t.se

www.m-i-n-t.se

Instagram @mint.abf

TEAM

Cathrin Mayer, curator

Emily Fahlén, artistic director

Alice Söderqvist, producer

Julian Redaelli, invigilator

Thomas Bush, designer

Theodor Ander, exhibition technician

Olle Arbman, exhibition technician

Alfred Boman, exhibition technician

Ines Bartl, light designer

Sona Stepanyan, coordinator of residencies

Hedvig Colt, intern

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