

Heinrich Dunst

*sink*

28. 1. – 30. 4. 2023

Press talk: 27. 1. 2023, 11 am

Opening: 27. 1. 2023, 6 pm

HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark

Burgring 2, 8010 Graz (AT)

Publication

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Heinrich Dunst is currently seen as *the* Austrian conceptual artist. His work focuses on the analysis of art and on testing its potential, with language and object in an open dialogue with one another. Important questions concerning the function and the conditions of art are raised, and they run up against reality and its challenges.

These finely tuned works follow a conceptual approach that refers to the specific place where they are presented within an open interplay of images, language, and context. The concrete production and processing of art is at the center, and it is directly and humorously tested as to its relevance. Dunst sets art and its signs in motion by creating a dynamic referential media interplay of the visible and invisible, composed of image, film, and language—thereby proposing possible responses to the ambiguous signs of our fragmented present. For HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark Dunst has created an expansive walk-in installation that can be entered from different directions and that unites his works in a stringent dramatic arrangement. The works here are nearly all new works made especially for this exhibition.

“That part of the concept corresponding to the wrist,”<sup>1</sup> a line from a poem by the US author Ben Lerner, is set in large letters on the wall. This and all the other objects and installations spread around the gallery already refer to an ensemble held together by poetic forms of language, like placeholders, hinges, or the wrist named in the text by Lerner. This ensemble is based on a specific sequence, and the structure of the exhibition named *sink* derives from the placement of objects, sculptures, and prints, which to a degree undermines habitual perspectives of words, images, and experienced situations, and also the conventions appertaining to the presentation of art therein. Even though the focus here is on the interplay of the various objects that are related to each other within the format of the exhibition, they are nonetheless understood as autonomous works in themselves. For the duration of the exhibition they are linked as individual forms that are transferred into other forms (object, text, gesture, medium, industrial production, sculpture, abstraction, monochrome work, etc.). These transfers address different artistic methods and techniques in relation to the depiction and description of a specific object. These variable, but referential categories and a number of individually placed forms together interact with the model to produce a flow, and also productive gaps that permit different readings. The situation is reminiscent of a script of shifted meanings that has been laid open and within which poetry and language create remarkably concrete images, and reality and its objects can be viewed in a completely new light.

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This show thus aims to make visible strategies of displacement, creating gaps, and changing speed within artistic idioms, in order to weave a rich network of forms that attempts to show how art is created between ideas, language, and objects. The associative spaces that are opened up in this way leave the beholder with a myriad of possible interpretations, even though the artist has set up a formally strict sequence of works. Heinrich Dunst addresses the “migration of forms” including grasping at the objects whose status that can otherwise be so difficult to adequately describe in our media-based ephemeral age, and yet this concerns their so hard-to-achieve contemporary definition as works of art. The exhibition title *sink* has a clarifying role here, as to how language can become image, and how the transfer and openness of an object toward other forms can be potentially possible in the face of all the difficulties. Thus, each individual beholder may find their own ideas, concepts, and social anchor points when reacting to Dunst’s enactment. Ultimately, the impossibility of any free and easy direct medial transfer of language, and perhaps also visuality, and particularly this non-transferability is what interests Dunst as a way to nonetheless create contemporary forms.

The exhibition is accompanied by a program of events, education, and a publication with saxpublishers (Vienna). By way of dialogue with this exhibition, we are presenting the international group show *on affairs*, in which a younger generation of artists explores the technique of isolating objects, images, and language within our contemporary plethora of text and image signs.

<sup>1</sup> From the cycle *Twenty-One Gun Salute for Ronald Reagan, No Art*, London 2016.

Heinrich Dunst, \*1955 Hallein, lives in Vienna

Among many others we allow us to highlight following shows: nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Vienna (2019, 2013), House of Art, České Budějovice (2018), KOW, Berlin (2016, 2014), Kunstverein Schwaz (2015), Ludwig Forum, Aachen (2015), Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2014) and Secession, Vienna (2014).

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