

BQ

ICH - MASCHINE

Alexandra Bircken, Peter König, Bojan Sarcevic, Raphaela Vogel, Hannsjörg Voth, and Lambert Maria Wintersberger

Opening Sat, March 4th, 2023, 6-9 p.m

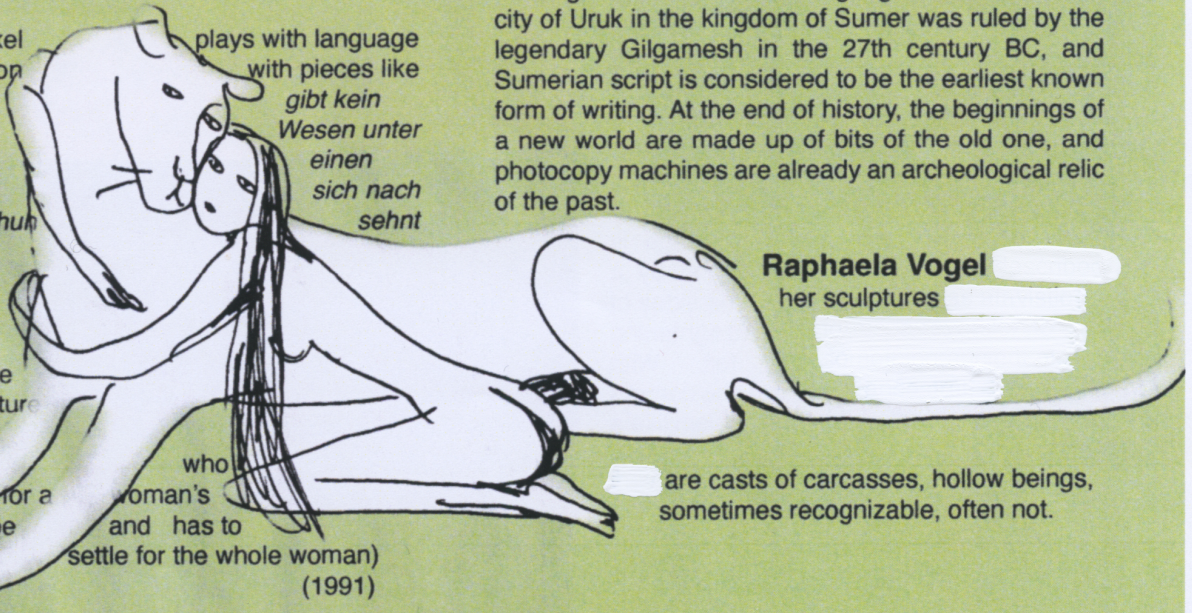
Exhibition 7.3. - 15.4.2023

EXHIBITION TEXT BY VIOLET HANDFORTH

The idea of combining man with machine, blurring the lines between the self and the techno-social structures that surround it and seek to control it, has been played out many times. But there is often something missing: an emotional, personal element. *Ich-Maschine*, the 1992 album by the indie-pop band Blumfeld from Hamburg, Germany, has a circling, flowing rhythm and the introspective, humorous, depressed yet strangely hopeful lyrics of Jochen Distelmeyer, the band's singer and lyricist, describe the feeling of eternally being thrown back onto yourself, that one cannot run away from oneself, and that ultimately, the self is the ground which makes contact with the outside world as the machine of socio-political life.

Word-play, self-deprecation, and the ability to shed light on the absurdity of the mundane feature prominently in *Ich-Maschine*, with song titles like *Ghettowelt* (Ghettoworld), *Von Der Unmöglichkeit „Nein“ zu sagen, ohne sich umzubringen* (The Impossibility of Saying "No" Without Killing Yourself), *Penismonolog* (Penis Monologue), *Pickelface ist Back In Town* (Pimple-face is back in town), and *Laß uns nicht von Sex reden* (Let's Not Talk About Sex).

Rosemarie Trockel in a similar fashion *Ohne Titel (Es unglücklicheres der Sonne als Fetischisten der einem Frauenschuh und mit einem ganzen Weib vorlieb nehmen muss K.K.:F)* (There is no more unfortunate creature under the sun than a fetishist years for a shoe and has to settle for the whole woman)



plays with language with pieces like *gibt kein Wesen unter einen sich nach sehnt*

who (1991)

and *Gewohnheitstier I* (Creature of Habit 1) (1990), exposing both oneself and the world as being a funny-sad mixture, both overwhelming and underwhelming.

The subjects of **Hannsjörg Voth's** paintings are all laced up and torn apart. They are perfect forms joined in an imperfect assemblage, straining to come undone. In *Zwänge der Gesellschaft* (Constraints of Society) the helmet-like shape appears militaristic, combative, hooked up with wires to a set of controls, like the cockpit of a fighter plane, strapped in and ready to deploy and be destroyed. A condemnation of flesh.

Bojan Sarcevic's *Untitled* pieces are framed with snakeskin. The organ-like molds of interior parts of a BMW car are grotesque and unmistakably human, made to look like flesh with ingrown hairs [redacted] a constellation of white-head pimples like pearls, blue-green veins, and a medical dental cast. Sarcevic's sculpture entitled *Uruk* is a xerox copier machine with eight alabaster cones balanced upon it. The cones or "Keile" refer to cuneiform, "Keilschrift", the original form of written language. The lost ancient city of Uruk in the kingdom of Sumer was ruled by the legendary Gilgamesh in the 27th century BC, and Sumerian script is considered to be the earliest known form of writing. At the end of history, the beginnings of a new world are made up of bits of the old one, and photocopy machines are already an archeological relic of the past.

Raphaela Vogel her sculptures [redacted]

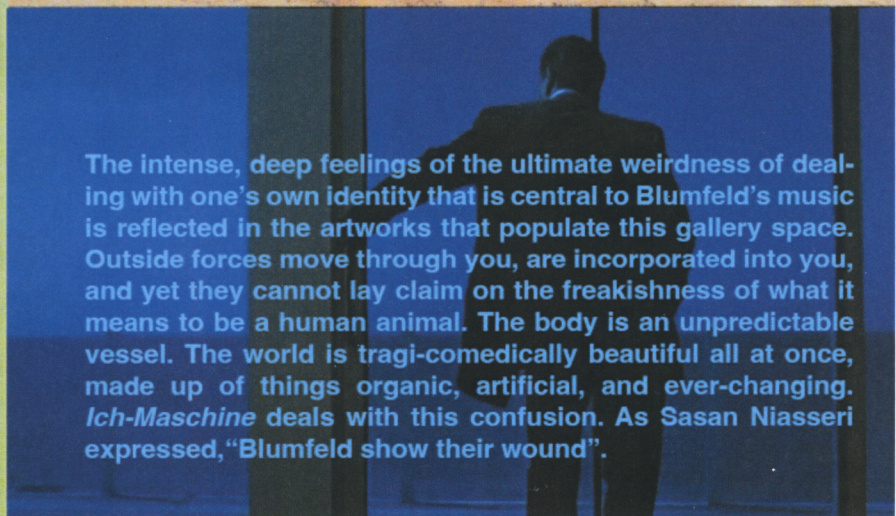
[redacted] are casts of carcasses, hollow beings, sometimes recognizable, often not.

Adlergestell seems like a large bird with tattered wings, a fallen angel, propped up on two walking aids for feet, a hobbled version of the heraldic animal of the German state. The two angelic beings, two guardians or portals, both entitled *Wer bin ich* (Who am I), are draped semi-crucified over stained glass structures. One seems to turn its face away from us, palms up; if we saw an angel today, would we recognize them?

The Tourist by **Alexandra Bircken** greets us with great presence and great strangeness, grace and menace. Wearing breastplate, a sword-blade for one hand, holding a vacation-destination tote bag with the other, standing with feet encased in epoxy hooves, like a dead man in cement blocks, the tourist feels like a pilgrim from another world both foreign and familiar. Matsuō Bashō, a Japanese poet of the Edo period whose family came from a long line of samurai, wrote a book of poems while traveling from place to place. The compilation of these poems is entitled *Back Roads to Far Towns*. Bircken describes the Tourist as a warrior fashioned after Electra, the great avenger of Greek mythology: "Here speaks Electra. In the Heart of Darkness... You'll know the truth when she walks through your bedroom with butcher's knives."

Kain und Abel, by **Peter König**, is split into a diptych, the brothers facing each other from across the divide, connected via a blunt instrument. They have sad eyes, glistening with the beginnings of unsheddable tears, and ashen gray skin; all the life has been sucked out, the machine of war feeding off of organic energy, the energy of love and fear and pain.

Lambert Maria Wintersberger's body of work deals with antiseptic cleanliness as a form of control. *Verletzung* (Injury) depicts a form with a sharp chunk cut out of it, the downturned lip mimics the movement of a knife. The moment of injury creates a radiation of pain, which can occur both physically and in the subconscious. And this first instance of subconscious pain, an unfairness, marks the beginning of the end of childhood. In *Fesselung* (Bondage), the idea of bondage is paired down to its most minimal, bound by a single tie, the binding string digs into the sides of the form; the moment of constraint and tightening when the pressure is first felt. With *Fesselung-Oral 2*, a dental nightmare, the corners of the mouth peeled back with a mechanism like a horse's bit.



The intense, deep feelings of the ultimate weirdness of dealing with one's own identity that is central to Blumfeld's music is reflected in the artworks that populate this gallery space. Outside forces move through you, are incorporated into you, and yet they cannot lay claim on the freakishness of what it means to be a human animal. The body is an unpredictable vessel. The world is tragi-comedically beautiful all at once, made up of things organic, artificial, and ever-changing. *Ich-Maschine* deals with this confusion. As Sasan Niasseri expressed, "Blumfeld show their wound".