

04/01 – 07/02/2023

Simon Lehner

I love you like an image

Simon Lehner's (\* 1996 in Wels, Austria) works revolve around the themes of memory, autobiographical construction, and mental health. He has a particular focus on visual material from a very personal archive: the photo albums and video cassettes documenting his own family life from childhood days. Increasingly important for his work, however, is media content that shapes the pictorial memory of society as a whole and of his generation in particular. Lehner skilfully takes apart this sometimes nostalgically charged material, deconstructing not only the photographic image and its claim to depict reality. He puts narratives about the self to the test and radically illuminates roles and enactments put on display for the camera.

In his first institutional solo exhibition in Germany, Lehner uses new works to establish the link between the mass media flood of images and the psychic inner life. Contents of a collective digital unconscious push to the surface of his images and compete intrusively for attention. Fragmentation of the self-image runs like a thread through Lehner's work, as does the tendency to pull the rug out from under any completed imaging process. His works suggest a continuous movement from photographic relic to 3D video works and virtual simulations to kinetic sculpture – and vice versa. The boundary between the medial external world and internal performances become fluid, with his critical questions about original certainty never quite letting go of the artist.