

Venus und Sonne im zehnten Haus

**Julia Dubsky, Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg, Simone Fattal,
Rochelle Feinstein, Estefanía Landesmann, Nancy Lupo,
Liz Magor, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Margaret Raspé,
Marta Riniker-Radich**

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Opening: September 9 and 10, 2023, 11 AM – 8 PM

Mehdi Chouakri Wilhelm Hallen

Kopenhagener Straße 60–72

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The repetition is the scene of a feminist instruction. A feminist instruction: if we start with our experiences of becoming feminists not only might we have another way of generating feminist ideas, but we might generate new ideas about feminism. Feminist ideas are what we come up with to make sense of what persists. We have to persist in or by coming up with feminist ideas. Already in this idea is a different idea about ideas.
Sara Ahmed in *living a feminist life*, 2017

In the visual arts of the 1960s and 1970s, the serial and standardized procedures of Pop, Minimal, and Conceptual Art began to undermine the essentialist imperatives of originality and authenticity that had inspired artists and their works. With these strategies, the neo avant-garde reacted to a new social reality, critically confronting it primarily by way of a wide variety of repetitive processes. This aesthetic strategy—and motif—of repetition is deeply anchored in the gallery's program, with artists such as Charlotte Posenenske and Peter Roehr as well as Hans-Peter Feldmann and John Armleder. As Posenenske wrote in her manifesto, repetition served as an expression of objectification and de-subjectification, translating the democratic ideas of the 1960s into a more participatory and accessible understanding of art.

I make series because I do not want to make single pieces for individuals [...],
in order to make something which is repeatable, objective [...].
manifesto, Charlotte Posenenske, 1968

While the progressiveness of this concept by the neo avant-garde lay in the introduction of a neutral maker and viewer, in the context of contemporary identity politics, our understanding of subjectivity and objectivity has largely changed and diversified. British author and feminist activist Sara Ahmed describes repetition in this context as a “site of feminist instruction.” Ahmed thus emphasizes that feminist theory is not a static academic container, but a “life decision” and work in progress, anchored in everyday life and subject to constant repetitions, loops, and learning processes, as well as corrections, interruptions, and changes. With this as a starting point, the group exhibition *Venus und Sonne im zehnten Haus* brings together a range of contemporary artists using serial and standardized methods to contextualize their own artistic subjectivity within our material and polyphonic reality: between generations, cultures, subjectivities, and media. The ten artists gathered here—Julia Dubsky, Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg, Simone Fattal, Rochelle Feinstein, Estefanía

Landesmann, Nancy Lupo, Liz Magor, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Margaret Raspé, and Marta Riniker-Radich—all engage with the artistic principle, aesthetic, and motif of repetition in their own individual ways.

In this context, Liz Magor, Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg, and Nancy Lupo address the material and formal vocabulary of everyday objects designed for serial mass production, from clothing and storage systems to decoration and packaging to the furniture from both private and public spheres. Their sculptural works interweave these items from our material world with their personal histories, elevating them as both physical and emotional artifacts. As such, Magor's shoe boxes in *Xhilaration* (2019), meticulously decorated and presented in a boutique-like fashion, bear witness not only to their own making and functionality, but also to their Zeitgeist and to the identities and preferences of their human counterparts. Dunkelberg's sculptures *SUN CITY (north)* (2021), *SUN CITY (south)* (2021), and *SUN CITY (west)* (2021), whose titles refer to a model city for so-called "health seekers" in sunny California, continues the preoccupation with the ambivalent relationship one has to the architecture and interior design of their environment. Combining a wide variety of stylistic elements from different eras—from Rococo to Art Deco—the velvety wooden replicas of historic tiled stoves self-confidently flirt with their own model and décor-like qualities—in other words, with their fetish character. Lupo's works serve to culminate this hybrid object disposition. Parts of a series titled *teller*, the wall works *Cradle* (2021) and *Thorn* (2021), as well as the floor work *I* (2019), are to be understood as variations on the same formal preoccupation. As something of a sculptural homonym, the three sculptures all combine the same range of material references and meanings: from the paper architecture of an origami fortune-telling game to the skeletal scaffolding of temporary tent structures, or the specific job title of a bank employee.

In paintings and drawings by Rochelle Feinstein, Simone Fattal, and Marta Riniker-Radich, the preoccupation with repetition—as a strategy of appropriation—takes place mainly through a moment of irritation and disruption of the serial. *Analog retrospective. 1992/2008* (2012) by Rochelle Feinstein, a slide show of nearly one hundred of her works from fifteen years of artistic practice, summarizes the artist's seemingly "inconsistent" oeuvre using the fundamental method of revisionist recycling. With her ever-changing references to a modernist dogma, she not only makes the principle of genius-based—male—authorship the subject of her works, but also takes it to absurdity through a kind of anti-signature style. Riniker-Radich similarly dispenses with a coherent representational logic and technique in her drawings. Reflecting on concrete historical figures and sociocultural phenomena, she draws from their repertoire of visual language and blends it together with personal experiences and associations and the technical conditions of her chosen media. Thus, the series *Physical Assets Are Always the Last Resort* (2022) is to be understood as a wide-ranging examination of our meritocracy's physical and psychological environment trimmed to individualism. Additionally, in Simone Fattal's works, what is seen and felt plays a major role. Whether books, sculpture, painting, drawing, or, as here, watercolors—Fattal's works can always be understood as cyclical collages of wide-ranging cultural and personal (environmental) influences. Through the almost meditative engagement with the material, these are condensed into a vision of the world in which time and place, body and mind, the unconscious and the conscious, and different cultures overlap, and nothing pure or original exists.

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas's textile and Julia Dubsy's painterly works continue the engagement with identity in the realm of the figurative, with different degrees of abstraction. Mirga-Tas's large-scale patchwork works *Zinet Galushi* (2019–2022) and *Delaine Le Bas* (2019–2022) portray women of the Rom*nja community, symbolically sewing them into the fabric of European society as emancipated representatives of the largely marginalized community. The various pieces of fabric, which often were possessions of those depicted, reflect a society that is connected via intercultural threads and contains multiple interdependent webs. With regards

to the immanent question of painting, Dubsky's works always maintain this ambivalence of representation and reality, also via the reduction of her color palette to exclusively red and blue tones. The four-part series titled *4Actors*, *4Actor*, *4Acto*, and *4Act* (2022) conceptually addresses this state of tension by translating acting into the painterly process. Through repeated embodiment, perception is directed to the process of imitation and the differences that become both conspicuous as self-referential phenomena and serve to highlight the individual specificities of the painterly means. The figure itself becomes overtly recognizable as a staging and projection surface, just as the four paintings in the series reveal themselves to be performances of the other paintings.

Margaret Raspé and Estefanía Landesmann continue this investigation of objectivity and subjectivity in the realm of technical reproduction and the related fields of commercial and cultural value creation. Through the lens of different media, both explore how ritualized processes of perception and action consciously and unconsciously structure and classify our social interactions. Raspé's works explore this primarily in relation to everyday routines, such as that of (female) housework. While her chosen media of filmic and photographic works address the technical aspect of industrial automation, relating it to manual labor, the automatic drawings on view in the exhibition expand this preoccupation to include the aspect of the subconscious. Landesmann's photographic series titled *Fig.* (2019–2020), on the other hand, refers to scientific and encyclopedic methods of representation and knowledge production. The photographs show quite subjective but stage-like excerpts from public collections dedicated to the production of cultural and collective identities, such as museums, archives, and libraries. Just as the title—*fig.* as an abbreviation for figure—refers to methods of classification and categorization based on repetition, the images convey the formal conditions of a standardized form of representation in a media-reflexive manner. Landesmann thus exposes the potential of photography as an instrument of standardization and control and distances it—and herself—once again from the supposed promise of objective and neutral representation: the fundamental question of this exhibition.

The exhibition is co-organized by Adina Bayer, Mehdi Chouakri, and Hendrike Nagel.

— Text by Hendrike Nagel

— Translation by Sofia Leiby