

The exhibition *A Different Person* follows the idea of a group exhibition as a dynamic process. The artworks thus function less as an argument for a thesis, but instead develop the dramaturgy of the exhibition intrinsically and in dialogue with each of the other positions.

The title of the exhibition is taken from the memoirs of the American author James Ingram Merrill. By writing his memoirs under the heading of 'a different person', Merrill refers to the draft character of subjectivity: the 'I' is always someone else. It carries the projection or potentiality of the other within itself and always remains a fragment or something provisional. This probing of subjectivity as a precarious and temporary construct that is also always alien to itself forms a central moment of the exhibition.

Birgit Megerle's figurative paintings, for instance, are based on photographs she has taken of models and then newly arranged. Her figures suggest a concrete identity, but one that always eludes being grasped. Her pictures are peopled with androgynous figures, female dandies, young adolescents, arranged as though on a stage or frozen in the moment of performance. They all evoke memories of everyday poses and fashions, but they are in their own social reality. Characters are alluded to, but not carried out, the subjects remain strangely enigmatic, their portraits beautiful, but impassive, too distant to let us really come close to them.

Enrico David's works also materialise on the boundary between beautiful appearance and the strangeness of the subconscious. Figures predominate in his images and sculptures, which embody this ambivalence in various roles and models. Sometimes they have a carnivalesque effect, but less cheerfull, rather grotesque and angry instead. They are figures of a surreal world, in which anxieties, horrors and violence – the whole discontent of civilisation – are expressed and irritate the stability of the subject. Conflict is present even in the décor, and elegance closely follows ugliness.

In her film 'Ben', the British artist Emily Wardill outlines a filmic space of the subconscious, in which the narrative and protagonists remain both fragmentary and indeterminate. Voices alternate, while eccentrically costumed persons as probands take part in a hypnosis. The sound for the film is spoken sonorously by the hypnotist alternating with a girl's voice reading the psychological study of an unknown man (Ben) with a wavering voice. As in Wardill's other works, the relation between language and image is explored to its limits. Voices and setting are the unsteady components of a plot that could tip at any moment.

Text and language play an also important role in Josef Strau's artistic practice. His texts treat the conditions of his work and experiment with forms of cultural expression, bringing the figure of the

author into play as subject. At the same time, Strau always integrates the texts he has written directly in his pictures and installations, or he distributes them as posters to be taken home. Alphabets, acronyms, or the first letter of his own name are sculptural or spatially presented. For some time now he has been exploring the idea of 'automatic writing' as a presumably 'authentic' and direct realisation of inner states.

Staging and testing oneself in artistic practice is also evident in Michele Di Menna's work in perfect consistency. Performances, texts, collages, costumes, objects, videos and sound revolve in a single project and form the processual space, in which the artist acts with other performers. She frequently focuses her interest on materials that she removes from their original context and assigns new purposes to. Currently she is devoting her attention to fluid substances and forms in a constant process of transformation, such as water or mud, which she performatively combines with new images and narratives.

The moment of the ephemeral and the transformative is present in Nick Mauss' works in a different form. His drawings and sculptures seem sketchy, still unfinished, sensitive and fragile. Motifs are only hinted at and outline a poetic apprehension of memory and influence. The artist evades every definition and categorisation, emphasising instead what is fragmentary and elusive in his work: Drawings are started, forgotten, and used again somewhere else as a found component. The works are thus in an ongoing process, in which lacunae indicate something that has been taken out or is yet to be set into the picture.

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