

Daniela Kneip Velescu
Vampire Facelift

March 10 – May 12, 2024

Factually and sternly, Daniela Kneip Velescu welcomes us to *Vampire Facelift* at the Kunstverein Graftschaft Bentheim. The inspiration for the name of this exhibition is a minimally invasive method for reducing wrinkles using one's own processed and concentrated blood plasma, quite a step up from her last show, which was merely entitled *Hyaluron*. Now Daniela Kneip Velescu seems inclined to take a more decisive approach and employ harsher measures. A press release stated somewhat gruffly that the artist already had »a few wrinkles«. However, Daniela Kneip Velescu tore down the house of cards of her own identity whilst laughing with Joie de Vivre. This comprehensive artistic showcase across many disciplines at Kunstverein Graftschaft Bentheim is based on the ruins of this architecture of self-awareness.

Last year, Daniela Kneip Velescu traveled with the support of the Stiftung Kunstfonds Bonn along the Danube to Satchinez in Romania, her mother's hometown. She moved along the historical migration route where her ancestors once immigrated to the Pannonian Plain in one-way ships. In the exhibition, we encounter a model of such an *Ulmer Schachtel* recorded on film. She slyly disintegrates the documentary-style severity of the material by embedding the presentation monitor into a coffee table.

Elsewhere, strange creatures push their way across a bureaucratic playing field in an A4 grid without any recognizable strategy or system—is this a cruel version of the *Snakes and Ladders* game or a fun migration bingo? Files pile up in the background and exude a strangely urban aura. The resemblance to currently stalled construction sites from Beijing to Berlin is unmistakable, and the fact that *Vampire Facelift* refers to a historic personality famous for his inclination to impale his victims is somehow quite perverse. Fortunately, now that she has our attention, Daniela does not confront us with such horror stories.

Nevertheless, this exhibition is not composed of cozy art. If the personal is political, art can also become personal to be political, right? We should be glad and grateful for Daniela'schutzpah. She consistently manages to elicit a smile even from the most serious context, gratefully distracting us from our uneasy feelings. *Vampire Facelift* is more than just an examination of history, it is rather a vehicle to grow beyond our present.

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