

During the Berlin Gallery Weekend 2013, BQ presents Alexandra Bircken's solo exhibition "Inside out".

In her fourth solo show with BQ, Alexandra Bircken tracks the inconsistencies of the dialectics of the Interior and the Exterior by questioning the traditional separation of cover and substance in relation to form and meaning, and by dissecting integrated forms into slices. For example, there is a glass case containing the multipart piece "Bruststück", a fragmented cast of a female chest that consists of several cast layers of latex. The largest part represents the complete left side of the chest; with breast, décolleté and parts of stomach and shoulder; the right side has been cut into pieces the interface of which reveals the "skin" and the deeper layers that resemble fat, flesh and ribs. The string vest that enwraps both the left chest piece and the surface of the smaller fragments reminds of a sausage netting and thus seemd to reduce the human body to anonymous meat; on the other hand, the obvious form of a vest emphasizes the human/female shape, thus functioning as an identity-generating form.

This function of clothing – to generate individuality as a deliberate definition of boundaries towards the exterior – is also illustrated by a torso and cut body fragments made of wax-covered clothes: the outer textile layer here appears as the flesh of the body, as the fragments of subjectivity. Similar to the dissected fragments of "Bruststück", the horizontal interfaces of these doubles of the body reveal their formation. Within the ambivalent structure of such an interface, dichotomies like interior and exterior, substance and surface, depth and plane collide and collapse. At the interface, that which is not visible and hidden turns inside out and forms two-dimensional but complex patterns that transgress themselves by referring back to the originally hidden as its trace. At the same time, they mark the lack of an embracing surface that sustains the illusion of integrity, unity and identity, and reveal a wound.

Opposed to these heterogeneous interfaces that are characterized by holes and passages, the exhibition also includes a bronze cast of rudimental sex doll. Deprived of its head, arms and lower legs, it resembles an amputated body. Different parts of the cast even bear traces of seams and stitching that manifest the fetishistic reconstruction work of an integrated double sustaining imaginary identification, rather than exposing the fragmentary condition of the subject. The mirroring, intact material of the sex doll cast as well as further bronze casts of the interior of its artificial orifices – technoid and phalloformous objects – thwart the complex and layered figures, as they merely function as projections of the beholder. Another opposite of the prosthetic cast bodies can be found in a hollow piece with two openings that is covered with tights. Whereas the material of the tights forms hanging tentacles on the outside, it composes a spiral cave reminding of an

umbilicus inside the larger opening. When having a closer look, one finds that this umbilical fold is another interface the structure of which evokes technical apparatus such as engines, rotors and turbines. It establishes a link with fragments of a dissected motorbike that is presented in slices, just as the doubles of the body. Together with a stuffed motorcycle suit, dismembered and stuffed sleeves and legs, the reconstructing view of the beholder makes it transform into a hybrid between human and technology – into a technoid centaur that combines the different aspects of the exhibition.

Simultaneously, an installation by Alexandra Bircken is on display at the Pavillon of the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz (vis-à-vis the gallery). The interior of the theatre's glass pavilion is filled with a large balloon that functions as an artificial, prosthetic lung and thus oscillates between a technical, pneumatic tool and a bodily organ.

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