

“I think that it is more interesting to talk about art in terms of the material that determines the work, rather than the artist’s identity...” Pamela Rosenkranz

Art’s task changes in a world suffused with generated images. It is imperative to reflect on what are often highly psychologically charged worlds of images, the ways they are reproduced, and represented. Over the last two decades, the relationships between image and text, language and body, body and space, subject and object have changed rapidly. Art’s brief is no longer to generate unique, original images, but to seek reflection in a de- subjectivized approach to the existing stocks of objects, images and spaces. The order of the day is to understand the world from the vantage point of abstraction and not to abstract from the world. The element of individual creation takes a back seat and the transfer of images and objects into the world of art becomes irrelevant as such. Today, visual reflection possesses a rhythmic, process-based and serial form. Serial repetition is less a matter of counterpointing sameness and difference and more a matter of weaving a never-ending web of relations; reflection can only occur within speculative variation.

In Ed Atkins’ videos penetrating, staccato-like sound and the serial poetry of incoherent narratives collide with the hyper-real presence and cold of animated human bodies. The line dividing the ostensible immaterial quality of his medium and the viewer’s corporeality are given an excessive spin. A sword elegantly slices through the body of an Axe shower-gel container. The highly psychologized shapes, colors and smells associated here with masculinity are poignantly broken up by Timur Si-Qin and reflected on in a neo-materialistic idiom. Surface, real and virtual spaces, digital imaging and analog staging are condensed and superimposed in Michele Abeles’ pieces to create complex image levels and meanings. Her work abandons the rigid symbolic order of things in favor of a constant circulation of images and changing angles of vision.

The Speculations on Anonymous Materials exhibition for the first time worldwide brings together approaches in international art that reinterpret the Anonymous Materials created by rapid and incisive technological transformation: With the technological changes of the 21st century the way we experience the world, our bodies, images and language has also changed radically. Responding to this, the artists on show do not set out to address the major paradigms of art history or the ideology of the exhibition space, but instead tackle objects and constellations encountered in everyday life. They do not aspire to create independent artistic worlds but instead draw on the wealth of images, materials, appliances and communications that surround us. However, they do not engage with these resources as masterful individuals aloof from society but instead regard themselves as elements of our culture. They thus seek to avoid the diktat of individual self-optimization: The notion of the artist genius, who creates intuitively and through his art also

encourages the viewers to confront their own selves and their link to the world through contemplation is abandoned for the sake of an interaction with the materials that structure our everyday lives. The artists transfer these mundane objects into the world of art without grand ado to then serially rearrange them.

These artistic works therefore fly in the face of any clear interpretation and undermine any supposition that there can be a world in which all is reconciled. Instead we encounter material speculations on the intangibility of tangible objects that we are all familiar with and yet cannot really construe.

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