

Roberta's first exhibition *What We Know* presents three artists who discuss self-image as a construct and expose its representation, whether in written or visual form, as fiction.

George Rippon (b. 1983 in New York, lives and works in Frankfurt am Main) builds abstract portraits of personal relationships and experiences having an impact on him. He combines elements of the everyday in to sculptural assemblages. Commodities with obvious signs of usage like crumpled packaging, receipts, allergy pills, toys, complemented with letters, postcards, text snippets from books, dried flowers and seeds become proxies for remembered and imagined physical and psychological states. The poignant personal sketches that emerge seem to allow intimate insights into the self-conception of the artist. Allowing individual interpretations, Rippon's fragmentary self-images question a clear separation between self- perception and external image. For the first time *What We Know* showcases a new work group of drawn movie scenes. The sketchy pencil drawings focus on different inter-relationships whereas the characters constellation to one another seems undefined and instable.

The artist Moyra Davey (b. 1958 in Toronto, lives and works in New York) has already participated in a wide variety of international exhibitions. Her cinematic, photographic and text-based works address different forms of remembering, reconstructing and recording memory as well as the ensuing relation of image and language involved. Based on the paradox of biographical representation – capturing experiences through language and photography fictionalizes them – Davey employs her own biographic scripts as part of a wider framework of biographical writing including writers, artists and philosophers. The film presented in the exhibition, *Les Goddesses* (2011), shows the artist equipped with a recording device and headphones walking up and down her studio, reciting a previously taped text. In this self-written essay, Davey interweaves the story of her own family with the life story of late 18th century British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughters Claire, Fanny and Mary Shelly (the author of *Frankenstein*), and associates it with re-narrated writings from journals of e.g. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Louis Malle. Through reading and incorporating literary biographies, the artist attempts a way of dealing with her own biography in a subtle manner.

In comparison, Lynn Hershman Leeson (b. 1941 in Cleveland, lives and works in San Francisco) goes one step further, creating a completely new personality, which she embodied for several years. Lynn Hershman Leeson is a pioneer of media art. In the last four decades she made groundbreaking contributions to photography, video, film, performance, installation, interactive and web-based art. She anticipated the nowadays controversial issue of self-determined construction of identity in context of surveillance and control, and the conflict of real and virtual world already in the pre-

digital age. In 1973 she developed the fictional character Roberta Breitmore, changing her outer appearance and creating a detailed psychological profile, body language and handwriting. Until 1978 the artist at times lived as the character Roberta Breitmore, who had a bank account, a driver's license, was a registered member of Weight Watchers and visited a psychiatrist. She had blind dates with men arranged via newspaper ads and hired a private detective to document these meetings. Her diaries, a record of her experiences and emotional states, were commented on by the artist Lynn Hershman Leeson. During the five years in which Hershman Leeson impersonated the character she created a vast amount of documents that disclose and annotate on the construction of the fictional character, becoming the proof of Roberta Breitmore's real existence, emerged. The exhibition *What We Know* puts some of these documents and relics on display.

Davey's concept of linking biographies can be compared to Rippon's technique of assemblage. Both artists use their method to cope with their own history, as a means to question and to construct an image of themselves. While Davey and Rippon perform self-observation in the mirror of their relationships to other people, Hershman Leeson completely distances herself from her own identity, her character and what shaped and defined her. She constructs a new personality from scratch, which she discusses and observes as an allegedly uninvolved outsider.

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