

From March 4, 2016, mumok is presenting two young artists who both reflect critically on contemporary concepts of nostalgia, re-evaluating these with new works made especially for this mumok show. Kathi Hofer (born 1981 in Hallein) draws on her own family history and an Austrian fashion icon—the artist comes from the Salzburg Hofer family that, up to the year 2000, produced the Austrian clothing brand Walkjanker. The timeless elegance of these clothes survived trends and technological innovation for fifty years, and they were included in the portfolios of top fashion houses and magazines and worn by international stars—including actress Grace Kelly, the writer Ernest Hemingway, and the Paris fashion designer Kenzo. Eloise Hawser (born 1985 in London) also works with objects that may seem to be long obsolete, bringing these under new conditions into the context of contemporary art. Her work for mumok is based on her ongoing research on cinema organs.

Drawing on the long tradition of the Hofer company, Kathi Hofer creates an updated formal language comprising reused materials, traditional knowhow, and inherited glamor. “A central idea of my project is the idea of recycling: the recycling of materials, processes, of knowhow, memories, of style and status” (Kathi Hofer). Hofer’s artistic materials are tools, production processes, display elements, sales accessories, and fashion photography from the heyday of the firm between the 1960s and the 1990s, all of which she combines to make her own new installation. Her gesture of appropriation refers to the complex social relations between people and objects.

In her first exhibition in Austria, Eloise Hawser looks for the traces of the passing of time, by continuing her research on cinema organs. These were invented in the early twentieth century by the British telephone engineer Robert Hope Jones, and were frequently used in the age of silent movies as an alternative to musical accompaniment of movies by an orchestra. Often, cinema organs were built into the architecture of movie theaters. With the advent of the talkies, they became obsolete, yet were often too big and complex to be easily removed from the theaters. Hawser has already explored this forgotten musical instrument in her 2015 exhibition *Lives on Wire* at the ICA in London and in her film *Solo* (The Burberry Wurlitzer). For mumok, she has made two new films based on her research into cinema organs, focusing on two silent cinema organs that today are found in former cinemas turned into fashion stores—the Burberry Shop in London (UK) and the former Wanamaker Department Store in Philadelphia (US). Hawser films these cinema organs that lie unused behind the scenes of contemporary temples of consumerism, and to do this she enters directly into the organs’ pipe chambers. These complex interiors make for a stark contrast to the “dressed” spaces of the fashion stores, with their plinths displaying carefully styled mannequins. The films seek to communicate ideas about the remotely controlled machines that hide behind the attractive facades of contemporary consumerist spaces. The chamber of each organ contains

chromatic percussion instruments including xylophones, triangles, cymbals, and tambourines.

Hawser brings these to life in her films and they begin to beat like hearts undergoing resuscitation. Hawser explores parallels between human bodies and machine mechanisms, and delves deeply into the “bodies” of cinema organs through exploring their innermost parts: the pipe chambers.

The works of these two artists are presented in a joint setting on mumok’s Level –2. Together they amount to a proposal on how artists may address historical and biographical fragments without succumbing to anachronisms. Hofer and Hawser take an accomplished look at the found fragments of the past so as to bestow new meaning on them for the present.

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