

Chantal Kaufmann: „omw! (On my way!)”

Duration: 17 May – 26 July 2025, opening: 16 May 2025, 7 p.m.

In her solo exhibition, Chantal Kaufmann develops multimedia, textual collages and dissects her favourite subject of investigation: language. By dismantling and breaking it down, the unexpected and the subtext between the lines materialise from its remains on the canvas, in video or in objects. In order to break out of the logocentric cage of language, into which we (must) enter from early childhood with our ability to speak, the works create a delightful chaos of signs, symbols and deformities.

In 'omw! (On my way!)', Chantal Kaufmann combines her videos 'Imagine Language (Day_00, Day_03, Day_01)' (2022) with new works. In the three-channel video work, she draws attention to the limits of language as a means of expression. Letters, the symbols that make up language, reveal themselves to be flawed signs. Words are hesitantly typed and deleted when the letters refuse to fall into place. They shift to the subtitles until they finally disappear altogether and the editing, and thus the rhythm, takes over the speaking.

As if they had fallen out of the video, bent and stretched metal letters lie on the floor. The sculptural series 'A L S O' (2025) illustrates the idea of connecting language to a material reality in a literary sense. The letters physically occupy space and onomatopoeically take on the forms of their sounds. The scattered sculptures are reminiscent of the sounds uttered by children's mouths, which still float through the room without any clear meaning. They are visually repeated in a new 20-part photo series: young fans of an American boy band laugh from the walls. These are stills from a music video, taken during a live concert. The classic photo format of the work refers to the serial and industrial distribution of media images.

The concept of intertextuality, coined in the 1960s, is gaining new relevance in today's diverse media landscape – especially against the backdrop of digital cultures and formats such as memes. These draw on familiar images and motifs, reinterpret them and imbue them with new meanings. In this way, they exemplify how repetition and variation can give rise to subversive interpretations. This dynamic, which is omnipresent in digital spaces, is reflected in the works of Chantal Kaufmann: the recycling and abstraction of everyday images opens up new horizons of perception.

This practice is also evident in her painting. Large-format screen prints show photographs with motifs of everyday objects. They have been abstracted through countless rounds of technical reproduction, littered with geometric patterns and traces of the work in the print workshop, and finally harassed with a distinctly painterly gesture. Recycling and endless iterations of the same fragment form the driving basic rhythm of a continuous beat with which the artist operates.

Chantal Kaufmann thus moves in the field of tension between a sensual aesthetic, freed from unambiguous meanings, contents and codes, and the irresolvable contradiction that art itself, by definition, is a charged vehicle of representation.

Biography

Chantal Kaufmann (born 1984, Lucerne, Switzerland) lives and works in Zurich and Vienna. She studied fine art at Zurich University of the Arts (2012–2015) and critical studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (2017–2022). Her most recent solo exhibitions include: Kunstraum Memphis, Linz (2024); Kunstverein Gartenhaus, Vienna (2024); Milieu, Bern (2023); Galerie Kirchgasse, Steckborn (2023); and Oxford, Berlin (2022). Her video works have been shown at DOCK 20 Lustenau (2023), Viennale – Vienna International Film Festival (2022), mumok Kino, Vienna (2018) and were shown in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Bern (2022), Weiss Falk, Basel (2020), Museum im Bellpark, Kriens (2019) and Kunsthalle Zürich (2016). Kaufmann directed the independent art spaces UP STATE, Zurich (2014–2018) and Shoefrog, Vienna (2019–2020). She works as a senior artist at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, where she teaches in the painting department.

General information

Opening hours during the exhibition period:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Collection opening hours: By appointment

Admission to the exhibition and events at DOCK 20 is free.

Guided tours: Special tours and free visits for school classes are possible at any time during the exhibition period, even outside opening hours, by arrangement. For further information and to make an appointment, please send an email to dock20@lustenau.at

Visitor information

DOCK 20 – Kunstraum und Sammlung Hollenstein

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Contacts

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Press photos



Porträt Chantal Kaufmann



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Chantal Kaufmann „Imagine Language (Day_00, Day_03, Day_01)“ 2022



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Chantal Kaufmann „The Bigger Picture“, 2024 Foto: Kunstverein Gartenhaus Wien