

In her work of installations and time-based pieces, Phung-Tien Phan examines contemporary lifestyles, their social implications and the affirmative behaviour of the individual in different milieus and communities. *biste links oder frustriert* — the title of the artist's first solo show in the gallery serves both as a provocative question in regional language as well as a reference to the internal logic of the works on display.

*Actress & Actors* (2019), which can be seen in the first room of the gallery, denies a linear understanding. In the course of almost eight minutes, changing protagonists, perspectives and environments add up to something between scripted reality and a collage of images. Here, we accompany Phan through the filming process, with straightforward cuts, dairy-like scraps of material and intimate moments. We see Phan herself in a reenacted duel with passersby and with us, the viewers, follow the meeting of two protagonists from earlier works of Phan, are guests of nameless friends of the artist and in her home. We see refurbished old apartments and the white-painted villas of the Außenalster in Hamburg-Winterhude, and hear first hand of the little confusions of cosmopolitan love affairs, of privileges, ideals and wishes.

The perception of the camera highlights the awareness for the production process as a part of life, for the way in which even the smallest, incidental snippets become material. With no clear narrative form becoming manifest, the act of viewing makes us understand the absurdity of trying to read life as coherent story. The people's presence is transitory, they remain en passant and abstract while we consume them (and viewing is always consuming).

In the rollable sculptures *Volkswagen* (Longevity) and *Volkswagen* (Saigon) (both 2019) the artist stages a functional single room apartment on only a few square centimetres, which could be found in urban built-up areas from Hanoi to Cologne. Fully drenched in a colour each, they become a projection screen just like the overlying shelves. The displayed private altars have played a central role in Vietnamese Buddhism for millenniums in ancestor worship and sacrifice. For many Vietnamese, especially the ones in diaspora, they serve as a medium between the worlds, as an interface between the living and the dead family members, providing emotional support in a culture that rejects individualism. With the top-mount portafilter coffee machines repurposed to flower vases, each object becomes a piece of furniture in themselves.

While the absence of the protagonists in these two works becomes apparent precisely through the staged and spatially clearly defined settings, in the last room we encounter a compilation of international pop stars, actors, musicians, models, writers, recorded at the peak of their careers, in their early years. The artist has taken them from her own biography, projections and longings and

embedded them in the environment of commercially available pressboard vitrines full of German advertising toy trucks, with which they merge into an inseparable unity.

Phung-Tien Phan (b. 1983, German) lives and works in Essen, Germany, where she co-founded the collective New Bretagne and the project space Belle Air (2014 – 2017). Until 2017 she studied in the class of Christopher Williams at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. The artist recently staged solo and duo exhibitions at Drei, Cologne (with Whitney Claffin, 2019); Aedt, Dusseldorf, (with Niklas Taleb, 2018); and Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2016). She furthermore contributed to exhibitions at KW, Berlin; Werkhalle, Cologne (both 2019); Skulpturenpark Moltkeplatz, Essen; Glasgow Project Room, Glasgow; 8. Salon, Hamburg (all 2018); Shanaynay, Paris; Belle Air, Essen (both 2017); Kunsthalle, Dusseldorf (2015); and Museum Folkwang, Essen (2014) a.o. The summer 2020 will see a solo exhibition of hers at the Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg.

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