

Judith Hopf, end rhymes and openings

An egg wanders through Judith Hopf's film *Some End of Things: The Conception of Youth* (2011), strides stoically through the atrium of a modernist architecture, climbs the stairs, traverses passageways and connecting bridges, is mirrored by the grids of the facade in passing – until it finally fails in its attempt to gain entry into the edifice of glass, steel and concrete. The egg is too big, the door too small, and the bodies too hard to give way – an idea is caught in the structure of the standardized world.

The confrontation of forms as an intensification of the contradictions of contemporary conditions points to a central theme in Judith Hopf's work. In a world where everything seems to be in flux – communication, work, capitalism – Judith Hopf pursues the hard edges that still mark the field of the social despite all processes of dematerialization and de-hierarchization, standardizing bodies and identities and assigning each individual to its place. Within the field of vision of the control society, she explores demarcations between social participation and cultural exclusion, probes the vanishing horizon of alternative forms of living, and opens up a space of experience beyond the logics of (self-) discipline. Formal questions turn into ethical issues here, while the orders of the political surreptitiously manifest themselves in the material.

In this, Judith Hopf's view of social processes is a decidedly skewed one: she is expressly not interested in the immediate depiction of social or political facts in the medium of art. Instead, she makes use of art as an autonomous space, within which the circumstances can be made to dance. Specifically by claiming aesthetic autonomy, her works gain the possibility for themselves to productively circumvent contemporary discourses. Slapstick, comedy and caricature serve the artist as means for provoking ruptures and openings in the order of things, derailing well-rehearsed routines of interpretation – whether they are of a political or an aesthetic nature.

In this perspective, the diversity of Judith Hopf's oeuvre as a whole can also be read as a strategy of permanent self-provocation: the continuous change of media – from installation and sculpture, through film, video and performance, all the way to graphical and ceramic works – and the collaboration with other artists that she seeks again and again repeatedly challenge the sedimentations of her own practice, thus opening up ever new spaces of productivity.