# Reality Manifestos, or Can Dialectics Break Bricks?

A study of détournement as Art Forms

http://kunsthalleexnergasse.wuk.at/ http://www.realitymanifestos.info/

### Kunsthalle Exnergasse

Währinger Straße 59, 2nd Staircase, 1st Floor, 1090 Vienna 19 January - 3 March 2012 Opening 18 January, 7pm

### Participants in the Exhibition

Marc Bauer, Sabina Baumann, Mareike Bernien & Kerstin Schroedinger, Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, Bogna Burska, Brice Dellsperger, Konstantinos Manolakis, Michele O'Marah, Cora Piantoni, Elodie Pong, "Schmale, Scheirl, Knebl Werke" (Toni Schmale, Hans Scheirl & Jakob Lena Knebl), Rebecca Ann Tess

With a performance at the opening by The Centre of Attention, and a sound performance and DJ set by DJ Sweatproducer (Anne Käthi Wehrli).

At the finissage on 3 March at 7pm, Hans Scheirl will give a public interview to the curator of the exhibition.

The exhibition and symposium are curated by Dimitrina Sevova.



#### Public Theoretical Symposium 19-20 January 2012, WUK Museum

The first entirely detourned film in the history of cinema: *Can Dialectics Break Bricks*?

A film produced by the person listed here [Yeo Ban Yee], who naturally has no idea what has happened to his film. Let it be said: all films can be detourned: potboilers, Vardas, Pasolinis, Caillacs, Godards, Bergmans, as well as good spaghetti westerns and all commercials.

From: René Viénet, Can Dialectics Break Bricks?

The theoretical symposium is organized in conjunction with the exhibition project of the same name, and serves to contextualize the exhibition and the artists' works and raise a public critical discussion among scholars, the artists and a broad audience. The exhibition and the theoretical symposium reflect upon each other in order to theorize the work of the artists and deepen the understanding of the topics and subjects addressed in the theoretical framework of the project, and issues concerning the relation between contemporary art and cinema. *The symposium is organized in collaboration with the Postgraduate Program in Curating, Zurich,* www.curating.org. *A special issue of the* on-curating.org magazine on the exhibition and symposium will be published in May 2012 with expanded texts based on the lectures.



#### Participants in the Symposium

Mareike Bernien & Kerstin Schroedinger, The Centre of Attention, Brice Dellsperger, Eva Egermann, Maren Grimm, Esther Kempf, Lucie Kolb, Elke Krasny, Boyan Manchev, Işın Önol, Bernd Oppl, Małgorzata Radkiewicz, Dorothee Richter, Nicola Ruffo, Simone Schardt & Wolf Schmelter, Dimitrina Sevova

And: artist talks by the participants in the exhibition.

Schedule of the Symposium see project website

### **Curatorial Input**

Ideology can only shatter to pieces on contact with radical subjectivity.

From: René Viénet, Can Dialectics Break Bricks?

The project takes as its point of departure the "first entirely detourned film in the history of cinema": *Can Dialectics Break Bricks?* (1973) by René Viénet, which adapts a spectacular film to a radical critique of cultural hegemony. The French word *détournement* is employed here for stealing, derailing, appropriating, misusing, re-enacting, rather than the specific term of appropriation that has acquired a special aura in an art-historical context, following John Stezaker's recognition that "appropriation is actually a misleading term, because it suggests mastery."

If in the principles of appropriation it is still largely the signifier symbol that is carried over, *détournement* through subversive "more direct reuse or faithful mimicry" hijacks the very signifier turning it into an object, from the Situationist films to the rebellion of the pioneering found-footage films of Bruce Conner, the Ready-Made remake or art-research practices, visual analyses, passion for subtraction and non-reflective mirroring, assemblages having their own value, which can hardly be incorporated by the commercial system.

Comprised of an international group exhibition and a two-day symposium, the project develops in the field of inquiry and investigation of hijacking and ready-made in contemporary art in relation to the cinema industry, and the possible transmission of properties between them. It investigates the space and the confusion of the border between image and representation, and specially focuses on the ruins of representation, what are the possibilities for translation, and where the idea of original and copy is lost. It follows the social, political and aesthetic content created as a dialectic clash between invisible and visible, or shifts between the notions of production and consumption, reality and fiction, creating temporalities in-between, bringing together a diversity of art practices that offer singular tactics of speculative misuse, repetition, faithful mimicry and détournement of existing images, visual icons, narrative patterns - re-enacting, rewriting and translating them. It marks a shift from knowledge to fight and from fight to passion and dance, involving the audience in the complicity in a crime of *détournement*, making them "committed spectators."

The project serves as a platform for investigating the structure and institutions of commercial cinema in relation to the institutions of art and images and the process of projection both in the most mechanical sense as a cinema camera and projector and their similarity to the function of human perception, as well as how psychoanalysis looks at the same principles of projection in the subjective and social field, as in how we project our fears and desires onto others, and how the norms of the psycho-symbolic formation of race, class and sexuality are repetitively performed. The works on display investigate the machine of cinema with its narrative structures, mythologies, representations, reproducibility, looking more generally at how these structures, institutions and borders are created, how value is created, how truth is imposed by the symbolic and economic conditions of a speculative industry. If the artist disrupts the surface of cinema, is there a possibility for upholding the claim for the autonomy of art as an institution? Ultimately, the project is about the spectacle, and what possibilities we have for subverting it, waking the viewer's gaze from its torpid contemplation while still getting *jouissance* from the images' seductive power.

#### Text: Dimitrina Sevova

Dimitrina Sevova is an independent curator, artist and writer based in Zurich. Her approach as a curator is research-based and involves references across disciplines, with a focus on language with its grammar and hidden hierarchies, on otherness, gender, sexuality, class, race and power relations.

#### http://www.code-flow.net/

#### Works in the Exhibition

#### Marc Bauer (CH)

http://www.marcbauer.net/

Marc Bauer was born in Geneva, lives and works in Amsterdam and Berlin. The subjects of Marc Bauer's drawings and installations are selfreflective, often mingling his personal story and memory with painful episodes of History, supported by archival photographic evidence. His work is included in a number of public collections, among them Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Kunsthaus Zürich and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

#### Monument (2009)

Pencil and black lithographic crayon on paper, 32 x 45 cm. Collection of Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, acquired by Gesellschaft der Freunde bildender Kunst 2011/2012.

#### Roman – Odessa (2009)

Pencil, colored pencil and black lithographic crayon on paper, 32cm x 45cm

#### Amnezia (Club Odessa)

Pencil, colored crayon and black lithographic crayon on paper, 102 x 72 cm. Collection of Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, acquired by Gesellschaft der Freunde bildender Kunst 2011/2012





Marc Bauer, Monument, 2009



Marc Bauer, Roman - Odessa, 2009

In a violent act of iconoclasm, Marc Bauer's black-and-white pencil drawings turn their naturalness and the representation of reality on its head. Détourned from Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin, the images are alienated from themselves and their context, but also from the very idea of representation in drawings, a double alienation transforming the original

forms into ghosts – empty, cold, fragmented and multiplied details. The unity of time is thus fully dissolved, taking to its consequence Eisenstein's organic dialectical montage. Marc's further estrangement of the scenes of the film from their original context confronts them to contemporary social and political issues. Weaving the narrative streams of the two series of drawings together, a research based on Eisenstein's film, drawing images from the past into today, the other following the story of Roman in today's Odessa, helps us to grasp the reality of contemporary Ukraine with its desperately oppressive conditions for living outside heteronormative expectations and representational matrix. The artist notes the dismissive comments of disillusioned Ukrainians about Eisenstein's film, as well as about the ongoing repression of gay culture there. "This movie is important for Western people, not for us. Who cares about the revolution? There is no trace of it!" The reaction of the broad masses was to dismount, together with the authorities, the monument to the sailors, and replace it with a new monument to Katharina the Great.

#### Sabina Baumann (CH)

http://sabinabaumann.ch/

Sabina Baumann, lives and works in Zurich. Besides her individual exhibition activity and art production both on a national and international level, she has initiated and co-organized various collective art and film projects, such as the 1996 "erotisch, aber indiskret" (erotic, but indiscreet), a series of events on art, feminism and pornography. Since 2002, in collaboration with Karin Michalski from Berlin under the "label" Casual a variety of projects took place on the topic of gender and

sexual identity, among them the feature-length experimental docu "Working on it" (2007).

home cinema selfs (2011), installation, diverse media

Sabina Baumann's installation deals with the social impact of television as an agent carrying multiple standardization, mastering a new spectatorship in which emerges the post-war mass-consumerist society together with the so-called nuclear family and an explosion of processes linked to the new arrangement of society, such as housing developments, or the mass accessibility of commodities and technological devices in the Western world.



Sabina Baumann, home cinema selfs, 2011

"The origins of my art and thinking comes from reading comics and the fact that I belong to the first TV generation. TV mirrored me society and created the ambivalent relation to the stereotypes and myths that I have. TV, later computers, are sampling machines by zapping/surfing. Usually people read me as woman. If I had a beard, most people would see me as a freak, I guess. The layers of me and TV stars show creatures that come close to a psychic realism." (S. B.)

### Mareike Bernien (AT/D) & Kerstin Schroedinger (UK/D)

Mareike Bernien (Wien/Berlin) and Kerstin Schrödinger (London/Hamburg) have been working in collaboration since 2006. Their works elaborate image-critical practices as well as re-writings and appropriative subversions of a normative filmic language. Their collaborative works include: *Wandbild (mural)* (2006), *The state of the picture has not been altered since* (exhibition, lecture and seminar, 2007), *as found* (video, 2009), *Chinese girls* (publication, 2009), *When translation becomes violence* (text, video and exhibition, 2010).



Red, She Said, 2011

Red, She Said (2011), Video installation, 14 min

"Colours colonize things. They conquer them and discover them, like a bucket of paint poured over something. Colours colonize things because they inhabit without asking for permission and initially refuse to commit to



an equal relationship. As Technicolorlando the figure changes her colour space and enters another time. In the new time, things are no longer modeled after the colours of nature, and colour is free from the places intended for it." (from "Red, She Said", Mareike Bernien/Kerstin Schroedinger, 2011)

#### Pauline Boudry (D/CH) & Renate Lorenz (D)

http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/



Salomania, 2009

Pauline Boudry is an artist based in Berlin, working with film, video and installation. She is interested in relating the usually separated fields of sexuality and work, contextualizing her research in a postcolonial discourse. Renate Lorenz has been working since the beginning of the 1990s at the interface of culture, theory and politics.

In the mid-1990s she curated a program at the Shedhalle in Zurich on the development of theme-based feminist exhibition models (together with Sylvia Kafehsy). In 2007 she curated "normal love. precarious work, precarious sex" at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin. Their works in collaboration often revisit materials from the past, usually photographs or films, referring to and excavating unrepresented or unlegible moments of queerness in history. These works show embodiments which are not only able to cross different times, but also to draw relations between these different times, thus revealing possibilities for a queer futurity.

#### Salomania (2009)

Installation with video and documentation

The 2009 work *Salomania*, consisting of an installation with HD film and documentation, reconstructs the dance of the seven veils from Alla Nazimova's *Salomé*. Artist, performer and gender activist Wu Ingrid Tsang (1982), and choreographer and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer (1934) are the performers in the film. The original movie from 1923 was directed by Charles Bryant, and was a film adaptation of the Oscar Wilde play with the same name. The silent movie was produced by openly gay actrice Alla Nazimova who also starred in it, whilst being Bryants (beard)wife at the time. The character of Salome gained popularity at the beginning of the 20th century with Oscar Wilde 1894 play. Women got together and imitated the exotic and liberating dance of the seven veils. Images of farness and of the technological can be seen as part of colonial politics, at the same time they seem to have been transformed by the film Salomé. Here they are established as images that make space for female or transvestic fantasies and desires. A space between the genders and between Orient

and Occident appeared to be possible. A documentation on different performers of the dance of Salome at the turn of the 20th century proposes a sort of archaeology in the history of queer performance and modern dance.

### Bogna Burska (PL)

http://www.bognaburska.com/

Born in Warsaw, lives and works in Gdansk. After graduating in painting, most of her recent work is based on found footage, video installations and conceptual appropriation, digital translation and manipulation of images and narrative patterns from commercial cinema. Her method to found footage consists in maintaining narrative consistency by identifying formal matches based on sameness, weaving one form to another through their similarity in a digital re-translation of the original cinematic material, all the while seeking to produce films that remain watchable and will keep her viewer's attention. She completed her PhD at the Intermedia Faculty of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk in 2009, where she has been working since 2006.



*Recollections* (2005/2008) 250 video stills printed on paper

The work is a study on the iconography of blood in cinema, based on a collection of stills from feature films depicting blood, divided into thematic groups, exhibited as photo prints.

Clocks (2009)

Series of found-footage videos where the rectangular film frame was transformed into a ring.

The left and right edge of a video frame meet in one line and the objects visible in the film move inside a ring similarly to clock hands. Based on co-relations between theories on time and structure of film medium this work is a collection of spcific film clocks presenting images of time – endless variations related both to the scientific idea of time and to subjective perception.

Shooting Star (2006/2008)

Found footage video (footage from 37 feature films), 47'25"

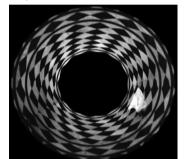
The work is an analysis of the phenomenon of the movie star, compiled from movies starring Al Pacino. Actors' appearances are always marked by a certain duality: of being a new distinct character in every movie and forming an even stronger, recognizable personality as an individual actor at the same time.



#### Bogna Burska, Recollections, 2005/2008



Clocks, 2009



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Shooting Star, 2006/2008

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### The Centre of Attention (UK)

http://www.thecentreofattention.org/

The Centre of Attention (Gary O'Dwyer and Pierre Coinde) is a gallery masquerading as an artist, or an artist masquerading as a gallery. Twelve years of collective practice against the serious in art, taking the risk of leaving a role to chance and interactions with their public, have taken them to the Venice Biennale (2005) and beyond. Their continuously growing website bears witness to an enormous variety of practices and rich collaborations. With their performance at Kunsthalle Exnergasse they will make *Reality Manifestos – Can Dialectics Break Bricks?* the first entirely *détourned* exhibition in the history of exhibition-making and contemporary art. At the height of the wave of current symptoms like privatization and piracy they question the elitist position of art objects, the autonomy and integrity of contemporary art, the habitus of the audience and the functioning of the exhibition space.



The Centre of Attention, COPYWRONG, 2012

*COPYWRONG* (2012) Performance at the opening

"we have dvds! Benjamin Guattari apparatus signifier realisation! Baudrillard, Deleuze, Kristeva, appropriation Groys contingent Butler techniques for mobilizing emancipatory politics! you wanna buy?"

(The Centre of Attention)

### Brice Dellsperger (F)

http://www.bricedellsperger.com/

Born in Cannes (France). After studying fine arts for five years in Nice Villa Arson, he moved to Paris where he has lived and worked as a visual artist since 1995, teaching at ENSAD since 2003. Dellsperger's works mainly consist in a video series which counts today 24 films of various length, named "Body Double" after Brian De Palma's 1984 feature film. Dellsperger's works have been exhibited in museum spaces such as MoMA (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), migros museum (Zurich) and widely screened internationaly, and are included in a number of prominent public collections including that of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.





Brice Dellsperger, body double 23, 2007

Brice Dellsperger, body double 14, 1999

*body double 23* (2007) 7'28", VHS/SD to Digital Betacam — based on "The Black Dahlia" (Brian de Palma)

*Body Double 23* is a portrait noir of Elizabeth Short. Doubling a scene from Brian De Palma's *The Black Dahlia*, the video is based on three sequences in which the viewer is placed in the position of a casting director. The work is informed by a certain surrealist aesthetic, and by some of the visual tricks that Man Ray for instance used in his photography, using regular black body make-up on black backgrounds. Unfolding in an unexisting space (cleared of any backgrounds) the screen-test dialogues enhance the girl's solitude, in a moment where Elizabeth Short passes from anonymity to celebrity, from life to death.

body double 14 (1999) 4'19", DV to Digital Betacam — based on "My Own Private Idaho" (Gus Van Sant)

#### Konstantinos Manolakis (CH)

Konstantinos Manolakis is a representative of the younger generation of Zurich artists. He experiments in his artistic practices with the methods of Constructivism and Minimal Art – not only in terms of abstraction and invention, but also of the interrelation between the constructions, the objects on display, the viewer's walking movements in the space and their changing perspective. The artist's constructions cause familiar spatial conventions to sway. His approach is characterized not only by deconstruction, but can be seen as new forms of territorialization in which the artist intervenes in the space building an architecture within the architecture, which introduces new temporalities in the relation between the space, the installation and the viewer.



White Screen, 2011

#### White Screen (2011) Spatial sculptural installation, diverse media

As a starting point for his installation, the artist takes sequences of Wim Wender's film Kings of the Road, a film dealing with the ruins of representation and the limits of intersubjective communication. On the advertizing panel at the entrance of a cinema in which no films are projected any longer, the words White Screen remain shining. On a first formal level the work is concerned with the issue of absence. emptiness, the white screen as a void, as the point with the highest concentration of potentialities, yet marked by complete indifference and innocence, as a witness to projections that may have taken place. The white screen can be seen on the one hand as a physical limitation of the field of vision, yet with the ambivalence between its materiality and the symbolic marking and formatting of the locus of the virtual, it is also an entrance to the virtual, an extension of the mental field, where fragmented memories are gathered in order to construct the linear structure of recollection. The white screen's emptiness is confronted to that of the blind spot in which there is no focus, no image, the emptiness between you and you that cannot be crossed – what prevents you from knowing yourself; that incommensurability in which you are confronted with your own limitedness.

On another level the installation deals with a certain desynchronization in the translation between the materiality and its textures, virtuality and textuality, and their relation to space-time. The artist takes the linear projection apart into the film's components of virtual white screen, image, sound, translated subtitles, and

looks at how the totality of meaning is organized between these structures in the unity between them, transgressing the limitedness of the different structures and opening up a multiplicity of meaning.

### Michele O'Marah (US)

http://www.brennangriffin.com/artists/view/46

Michele O'Marah lives and works in Los Angeles. She is an artist and filmmaker who remakes familiar scenes from popular movies and television, using a handcrafted technique that allows her to recreate the narrative as her own. "For more than a decade, O'Marah has been working in the geographic and economic shadows of Hollywood and has lavished attention on many of its forgotten or soon-to-be-forgotten products and by-products." (Michael Ned Holte, Artforum) Her work has been exhibited widely and is held in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.







A Girl's Gotta Do What a Girl's Gotta Do, 2009



#### A Girl's Gotta Do What a Girl's Gotta Do (2009)

Three-channel video installation, consisting of *The Death of Barb Kopetski*, *WORD UP*!, and *Don't Call Me Babe*. Courtesy the artist and Brennan & Griffin Gallery.

The trilogy is part of Michele O'Marah's long-term examination of the mass-media's representation of the revolutionary. The artist has cast three non-professional actresses to perform the character of Barb as an icon of femininity and MTV version of a revolutionary heroine, restaging scenes from the film Barb Wire (1996). She takes Pamela Anderson as an "empty center", imposing on the Hollywood machine her small economic non-budget and hand-made sets and props, shot mainly in the artist's studio, tactically reconstructing Hollywood productions. The artist subversively misuses the most sexually explicit scenes from the film, those with increased shock value, and produces a mimetic gesture not directly of the embodiment of Pamela Anderson, but of the very cultural and social codes. Anderson is a kind of ready-made object in the consciousness of mass-media society, playing herself in looped karaoke fashion between a scripted performance and celebration of herself. Her displaced presence, as an empty metaphor, allows O'Marah's actresses, without entering into confrontation with Anderson's performance, to substitute themselves to her and project other desires into the character as each turns into a cinematic persona of her own, each copy being approximate.

### Cora Piantoni (DE/CH)

http://www.piantoni.de/

Cora Piantoni lives and works between Munich and Zurich. The artist works primarily with photography, video, audio interviews and text, searching for the political and aesthetic implications of the documentary and its expansion in a contemporary art context. She relies on unspectacular forms of aesthetic resistance to market-driven representation, and takes a self-reflective approach to exploring oral history and its records, story-telling and labor. She shows a constant interest in Eastern Europe, both as an art scene and as a social and political geography, and specifically in the processes before and after the collapse of state capitalism and the end of communist ideologies, with the expansion of the free market ideology and the change in the perception of labor, as an important dystopian breakdown in Western society as well.



The Operators, 2011

*The Operators* (2011) Multi-channel video installation

One of the central concerns of Cora Piantoni's work is the representation of labor, which is increasingly disappearing from public view, and its transformations from skilled manual labor to current immaterial forms. its precarization and how it reflects on the concurrent dematerialization of the art object, which may open up possibilities for non-alienated alternative forms of production. In The Operators she reflects on her own day job as a projectionist, taking as a starting point Andrzej Wajda's film Man of Iron (1981), a film from the movement of "Cinema of Moral Concern," to explore the division of labor in the cinema apparatus, from production to projection, how time and the distribution of the gaze are organized, and how the struggle on the street can break into this formation. She makes interviews with the lowest level employed in the industry, projectionists in marginalized cinemas still working with physical film material in 35 or 16 mm, whose work has remained manual while the skills of their trade are being diluted in digital automation. She uses labor relations in cinema as a metaphor of the division of labor in society at large, and confronts issues of marginalized positions and inequalities, like that of independent cinema with respect to commercial cinema, or the confrontation between industrial factory and social factory, or the exhibition space as former factory space turned into a realm of authentic experience.



## Elodie Pong (CH)

http://www.elodiepong.net/



Endless Ends, 2009

Elodie Pong, born in Boston, lives and works in Zurich. As an artist and filmmaker she is known for her performative practices playing on the expected and unexpected in relation to the personal and collective and their interplay in the social structure, undermining the codes in mass-media culture. Through the power of speech and image her protagonists make statements as subjects reproducing and repeating various historical and social agents. Her works, psychoanalytically informed, are often built as cycles or in series, assemblages situated between the imaginary and symbolic in the social space in which the mass media act as active signifier in the construction of the self. She is interest in the possibilities of transforming social norms despite



normative demands. Her academic training as a sociologist and anthropologist allows her to approach in a complex, layered way identity politics, the constitution of subjectivity, collective consciousness and interpersonal relations in the language system and visual representation.

Endless Ends (2009) Video loop, 6'48"

*Endless Ends* is a soundless video installation composed of found-footage sequences from classic films featuring "The End". It seems, on first sight, to be a nostalgic anthology on the end of the grand cinema. Pong's main focus, however, is directed towards the endless world of negative space extending itself before and after these conclusions. The end per se is seen as nothing final, but as a marker of possibilities.

### "Schmale, Scheirl, Knebl Werke" (Toni Schmale, Hans Scheirl & Jakob Lena Knebl) (AT)

http://www.hansscheirl.com/

Toni Schmale, Hans Scheirl and Jakob Lena Knebl, all living and working in Vienna, have collaborated on a variety of projects before, and in autumn 2011 got together as "Schmale, Scheirl, Knebl Werke" to work more regularly in collaboration. Their participation in *Reality Manifestos* is at the same time the inauguration of the group's work. If the cinema machine is an important component that has given a push to the image economy in cognitive capitalism, how can we intensify a photo-negative process of becoming-together against control? For "the collective pursuit of pleasure is always in the forefront - revolution is a desiring machine!" (Lazzarato) The joy of life, the joy of work - what could that work be that does not look like work, in which we would boldly reconfigure the gender, body work? It is a question of play. What is this scenario? What are these transversal abstract figurations? A schizophrenic experimentation with social labor, producing a collective heterogeneous voice of the cinematic persona, producing a new utterance: we have always been more than one, auto-affections of the monstrous child.





WIR TRETEN DEM SPIEL BEI. WIR SPIELEN "GRUPPE". SPIELEN UNS AUF ALS GRUPPENSPIEL. WIR GRUPPIEREN DIE SPIELE. MATERIAL. DAS WERK IST DAS LOGO. FOTO. DAS WERK STEHT AUF. WERKSTATT. WERKSTATT GRUPPENSEX. 6 WERKSTÄTTEN SPIELEN EIN GRUPPENSPIEL. DAS WERK.

(SSKW)

SSKW, Untitled, 2012



### Rebecca Ann Tess (D)

http://www.figgevonrosen.com/artist/rebecca-ann-tess

Rebecca Ann Tess lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. Over the past three years the main focus of her work has been on a video trilogy examining stereotypes of character presentation and narrative patterns perpetuated from one generation to the other in European and US film and TV history through the prism of queerness, friendship and critical complicity. "Gender norms have everything to do with [...] who will be criminalized on the basis of public appearance." (Judith Butler) Drawing on the aesthetic typical of the respective films, she recombines filmic figures and dialogues into a non-linear narrative. She casts non-professional actors from among her friends to re-enact scenes and movie characters, agents of ambiguous gender and sexual identity who have tended to be miscontextualized due to power relations imposed by heteronormative ideology – symptomatic stereotypes that have survived generations of film production.

#### Dad Dracula is Dead (2009)

HD video projection, 16:9, color, English and German with English subtitles, 13 min.

Dad Dracula is Dead is the first installment of Rebecca Ann Tess's video trilogy. It looks back to the cinema of the twenties and thirties, a time of transition not only from silent film to 'talkies' but also for an increasingly regimented film industry. Although censorship codes were relaxed after World War I, there was a concurrent tendency to establish new control structures (such as the *Motion Picture Production Code* of 1930) to accompany the birth of film as a mass medium. Dialogue from the movies of



the time, including Anders als die Anderen, The Soilers, Mädchen in Uniform, Queen Christina, Sylvia Scarlett and Dracula's Daughter is repeated in Dad Dracula is Dead, performing a loop within this history. The characters from the films adopt the prevailing norms of living in that society, visible through their connections to and dependencies on each other.



Rebecca Ann Tess, Dad Dracula is Dead, 2009



Rebecca Ann Tess, A Crime must be Committed, 2010

A Crime must be Committed (2010) HD video projection, 16:9, color, 13 min., English

Rebecca Ann Tess's film *A Crime must be Committed* is the second part of her video trilogy. Scenes and characters from films representing prominent genres are restaged and altered. *A Crime must be Committed* deals with the crime and detective genre and quotes gangster-films of the 1920s (*Underworld*, 1927), film noir (*The Maltese Falcon*, 1941), detective films (*The Detective*, 1968), crime thrillers (*Die Hard*, 1988; *Shaft*, 1971 and 2000), and the contemporary criminal investigtion series (*CSI*, since 2000), among others.

"This retrospective shows how crime stories, constellations of protagonists, and their assigned roles are subject to change over time. They are the expression of different discourses in which the relationship between good and evil is renegotiated each time in the context of a new social-political situation." (Antje Krause-Wahl)



### KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE | WUK

Director: Andrea Löbel Media & Exhibitions: Klaus Schafler Exhibitions: Lina Leonore Morawetz Technics: Ernst Muck, Matthias Braudisch, Philipp Weikersdorfer Trainee: Clara Stein

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