

Gesellschaft für projektive Ästhetik

Georg Kargl

PRESS INFORMATION

Dialogue

Mladen Bizumic, Carter, Simon Denny, Gintaras Didziapetris, Mark Dion, Charles & Ray Eames, Andreas Fogarasi, Buckminster Fuller, Jeff Gibson, Mauricio Ianes, Ketty La Rocca, Thomas Locher, Ad Reinhardt, Andy Warhol, John Waters

Opening: 22. November 2018, 6 pm - 9 pm

Performance: 22. November 2018, 6 pm

Maurício Ianês *Investigation Bureau of the ideology of images*

Exhibition: 23. November – 26. January 2019

This exhibition is the concluding project presented at Georg Kargl Fine Arts by “The Society of Projective Aesthetics,” which, since 2017, has developed a number of platforms examining concepts of deceleration, reduction, concentration, and dialogue. Co-organized by Ines Lombardi and Simon Rees the Dialogue exhibition sets out to express meanings of ‘dialogue’ embedded within, and relative to, art in our time; and art’s production, exposition, reception, circulation, and dissemination.

References to ‘dialogue’ and its attendant ‘discourse’ might be considered quotidian for contemporary art: and part of regular procedure for galleries and museums. After all, one artwork placed next to another produces what Hal Foster describes as ‘the allegorical impulse’ or more simply put: a conversation between objects and their meanings posed in relation to the artist and the audience. A scan of the Society’s four framing values reveals its desire to position contemporary art in an intimate space in which those relations are brought to the fore.

That [ideal] space exists away from the encroachment of aspects of mass entertainment impacting upon museums and festival exhibitions/biennales. The jargon and values of Hollywood and broadcast television have — since the rise of the “blockbuster” exhibition and the proliferation of sales fairs — truly penetrated the contemporary art system and the way it describes itself and describes success. Reading or hearing about grosses, ticket sales, turnover, mentions, traffic, ratings, stars, and awards is commonplace: not to mention the digital equivalent of hits, likes, and hero images. There is a paucity of communication about content and context as core values, which might be cynical and self-preserving in this new age of populist government.

Meanwhile, the artists (and curators) whose work comprises the Dialogue exhibition, explicitly and critically refer to the aforementioned broadcast, production, and distribution systems with the aim of wresting degrees of power from them and reinvesting it in their artwork. Andy Warhol who was [a] progenitor of much of the commercialization referred to above is an abiding presence in the exhibition: his Electric Chair (1971) allegorizing tabloid fascination with grisly death (or Thanatos); and appearing as specter-qua-star in portraiture by Ketty La Rocca of her legendary Italian gallerist with the eponymous artist Cavelline e Warhol (1974) and John Waters fuzzy suite of photographs Andy & Jackie (1998) — plainly snapped off of a television screen — of actors playing Andy (we can easily recognize Bowie from the Basquiat film) and the schizoid-paranoiac young Jackie (played by Parker Posey in The House of Yes). Carter’s portraits of

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anonymous hands and legs are more innocent but are clearly associated with Warhol (and Robert Mapplethorpe's) Polaroids documenting his friends, fascinations, and social scene. Generally, the works are in dialogue with highpoints of the American century associated with sixties utopianism — their consequent dystopian turn — and their impact on contemporary art and culture through till today.

Lithuanian artist Gintaras Didziapetris's sound-work *Conversation Piece* (2008/18) redeploys the narrative of Francis Ford Coppola's classic Cold War film *The Conversation* [Der Dialog] (1974), in which a renowned sound engineer played by Gene Hackman, pulls off a masterpiece of espionage field recording on one of San Francisco's main public squares for a shadowy agency. Through the course of the film the agency turns and puts Hackman's character under surveillance and he descends into a state of paranoia (that word again). Didziapetris partially reconstructs the scenario and the field recording on one of Vilnius's main squares: re-scripting the conversation from a file in the de-classified Lithuanian KGB archives. Of course surveillance is a hot-button topic again in 2018 because of the new facility for recording [our] correspondence, behavior, movements, and maybe thoughts, embodied within 'big data' and social media. Mladen Bizumic's shredded photographs happen to depict the massive data bank on the Swedish tundra that handles Instagram's principal traffic. They are installed adjacent to a vitrine containing a de-constructed Kodak camera evoking photographic art's relationship with technological advancement and its coeval in obsolescence. As does artist Simon Denny's *Underwater Empty Vessel* (2013) that turns a cathode ray television case into a sculpture-cum-vitrine-cum-fish tank. Denny has made his career examining the logics, and cynicism, of planned obsolescence; alongside the R&D partnership of high-tech industries and military and intelligence agencies.

Thomas Locher's installation *Offen/ Geschlossen* [Open/Closed] (1997) has an idiomatic (artist's-cut) dictionary of words borrowed from the language of psychology and psychoanalysis emblazoned on the glass enclosed within a window frame system — evincing Locher and art's longstanding fascination with windows and doors as metaphors (think of Duchamp) as well as with selectivity, framing, data banks, and textual logics. A similar semantics, combined with Warholian deadpan, drives Jeff Gibson's animation dupe (2000/2018) of pithy lexical definitions that lampoon the role of critical theory and philosophy in 'art-speak' and its use by devotees. Ironically, in his letter to gallerist Iris Clert the American conceptual artist and painter Ad Reinhardt questions whether the art system (including museum curators) has developed knowledge and language enough to be able to appositely deal with conceptual art. Equally, in Brazilian artist Mauricio lanes performance work *The Investigation Bureau of the Ideologies of Images* — to be staged during the exhibition opening — the artist asks members of the attending audience about their understanding of the way image-and-text (including art works) are used in political campaigning and asks them to recall a specific image, which he searches for on the internet, analyses in conversation, and prints out. The index of the performance is an archival installation of these images within which he maps connections and builds a site-specific (in the case Vienna, Austria) relevance. While the title of Mark Dion's façade, replete with front door, of the Department of Cryptozoology (2001) says-it-all: as "cryptology" or "cryptography" is the study, writing, or solving, of codes (including hidden or secret ones). What sorts of creatures lurk in Dion's department in 2018? The mind boggles.

We might ask the same in relation to Buckminster Fuller's geo-desic and dymaxion projects had they come to fruition: what would they house today and what other future architecture might have evolved (and potentially impacted upon museum design)? Andreas Fogarasi's photographs taken in Paris of the *Mondial de L'Automobile 2004* (2004) posit a similar question: reinforced by his sculpture *Monument to the Year 2000* (2012) installed adjacently, the

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architecture of which could be borrowed by the display architecture depicted at the trade show. Let's not forget that for the latter-half of the 20th-century the year 2000 represented — in numerous novels, films, and manifesto — the start of a new future. Fogarasi and Fuller are joined here by the other American greats of pavilion architecture and exhibition design Charles & Ray Eames through their film *The Powers of Ten* (1968/77) about the potential of exponential powers — mediated by a camera/lens — to represent and visualize scale: and through it our known universe as the film depicts in close-up a picnic on the Chicago lakeside, zooms at a rate of 10-to-the-tenth meters a second to a view of the edge of the galaxy, and then shoots back at the same rate towards planet earth to end on the visualization of a carbon atom (the primal universal matter). Ever the experimenters the Eames's had found, in this work, a way of explaining art-architecture-design's role in advancing understanding and with it (they imagined) humanity.

Simos Rees
Co-curator

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MI– Fr 1 pm – 7 pm
Sa 11 am – 4 pm