

Okey Dokey
9/9/17 – 30/9/17

Okey Dokey is a joint exhibition project of galleries and exhibition spaces in Cologne and Düsseldorf with international colleagues. For this project collectively curated group shows will be developed in close cooperation with the guests and take place at the nine different spaces of the hosts.

Cédric Eisenring, Anna Virnich and us, we are very excited to have Kirchgasse from Steckborn (CH) with Maximiliane Baumgartner, Lulu from Mexico City (MX) with Lin May Saeed and Park View from Los Angeles (US) with Luchita Hurtado, Aidan Koch and Mark A. Rodriguez with us on this occasion.

MAXIMILIANE BAUMGARTNER (1986, DE) lives and works in Munich and Düsseldorf. Following her interest in (counter-)public spheres and their historical context within an urban space and the mechanisms the artist initiates and develops (often in collaboration with others) artistic fields of action. Questions of painting as a social and interactional field of activity are the point of departure in her artistic practice. Since 2014 she is part of the curatorial collective running the municipal exhibition space Lothringer13_Florida and co-editor of the semi-annually published magazine Florida. Since 2015 Baumgartner plays out and directs the nomadic space and social sculpture DER FAHRENDE RAUM in Munich.

CÉDRIC EISENRING's (1983, CH) artistic practice is focussed on fundamental questions of story telling and its potential within traditional artistic media especially printed graphic works, drawing and sculpture. In Eisenring's work fiction is established within real space time contexts. It seeks to overcome a general categorisation of fiction as self-centred illusory, disconnected or purely immersive. The boundaries of a fictive visual and the actual exhibition space become fluid and hybrid. He is engaged with moments of transition. Single images steadily shape an autonomous yet context-sensitive and ever to be redefined conceptual space, which is affected and informed by the experience of its material and its means of production.

LUCHITA HURTADO's (1920, VE/US) work interweaves figuration and abstraction, combining elements of pre-Columbian and ancient art with Surrealist tendencies. Representations of the body heightened in moments of enlivenment, and coming into contact with otherworldly forms and energies, recur in her work. Utilizing bold colors and dynamic compositions, Hurtado pictures bodies and language found wrapped up in their environment, transmogrified into some other matter and dispersed into raw energy. The work presented here is dated from c. 1954 and pictures a grouping of Hurtado's signature dancer figures (or are they from another time or planet) approaching an oblong shape that suggests a portal, moving towards some other dimension.

AIDAN KOCH (1988, US) has been well known in the comic world for nearly a decade, and has become known in contemporary art contexts for her minimalist and emotive drawings and watercolors that push storytelling to an economical zero point. For Koch, a line in itself, or a splotch of one color, can push forward her narratives, which are both determined within the flow of a traditional paneling technique but also open for elemental investigation and interpretation as individual images. Koch has produced a new 3-panel series for this context that portrays a scene of nature that is seen but then altered by a figure that appears in the lower half, whose face becomes obscured by a plane that intersects a mask and her own visage.

MARK A. RODRIGUEZ's (1982, US) sculptures come from vernacular urban and suburban contexts that take on significance for the artist in their transition from the outside world into an artwork, which he deploys as one art product among an assortment or inventory from his studio. He gravitates towards the recognizable and domestic, with an emphasis on seemingly banal or deliberately innocent imagery. In the process of sculptural transformation his works take on sharp, critical symbolic qualities related to consumption, waste, taste, selfhood and the marketing of the self. In the past few years he has produced series of tables, puzzles, lamps, audiocassette collections, flowers, and vinyl banners. In Cologne he will debut a new series of bronze frogs based on garden decorations found in typical American yards and homes. In his research he became interested in frogs in particular that were either resting or working, which he began referring to as "slave frogs." In his words: "The frog

form aids its owner in his or her presentation of domestic normalcy. Some of these garden frogs perform tasks although standing idle. They hold drinks, flowers, and toiletries, and serve as comic relief; they are slaves. They sacrifice their likeness for capital, serving the consumer at no further cost; they stand frozen with smiling faces (or sometimes disgruntled) while bearing the weight of a paralyzed culture."

LIN MAY SAEED (1973, DE) uses poor, non-noble materials, such as styrofoam, tooth picks, and wire, as well as others to create sculptures and two-dimensional works which address the relationship between human beings and animals. A bright and often airy palette, the relative simplicity of her figures, and a general lightness is often belied by dark undercurrents of a critical anxiety and distress due to the unbalanced and often exploitative nature of the relationship. Her formally inventive, playful and rigorous work draws upon everything from the dioramas found in natural history museums to the classical Greco-Roman sculpture and the iconography of Egyptian statuary.

ANNA VIRNICH's (1984, DE) work extend a variety of media. Objects and installations, photography and video exist alongside textile based tableaux, which can be thought of as membranes. Membranes are layers most of all determined by their permeability. They are structures setting a porous boundary between bodies and their environment, regulating the flow of energy between inner and outer space. Thereby membranes are constantly at odds with their environment, in a permanent nervous state of dynamic exchange. In Virnich's work, the formal dichotomy of transparency and density, the material consistency of fabric as well as the use of hide, in domesticated form, seem to be closely related to the image of the membrane. Furthermore the manipulative and oftentimes fetishising treatment of materials and a latent presence of the corporeal – sweat stains, stitches, sometimes reminiscent of fashion, sometimes of scars, tough leather, hazy and light gauze fabric, odours – manifests in objects, whose formal composition spans from symbolic exoticism to stringently calculated image construction.