

# DREI

Whitney Claflin

Why Limit Happy to an Hour?  
January 26 – February 4, 2024  
Haus Erholung, Mönchengladbach

How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?  
How do you pfand?  
A wine bottle, technically, is made of sand.

Events will record themselves whether you want them to or not. Snapshots can provide some sense of agency, especially when the moments get too liquid. Moments add up to hours, and Happy Hour always has a limit, but why limit happy to an hour?

An avatar multiplies time for its host. Time is what I've been seeking. No matter how much there is, I seem to want more.

I am still trying to learn to speak German, and, unfortunately, haven't gotten very good at it. The first time I included a mannequin in an exhibition was during the pandemic. I couldn't do a performance at the gallery, so I created a stand-in, an avatar, who could transmit via bluetooth for me. It seems not quite right to perform in English here, so I've made a new stand-in, another me, who is available to share her thoughts in the universal language of music.

I like to make work with waste. I like to save everything and find a way to use it, it's a form of nesting. To make my nest in Mönchengladbach, I began to save what I couldn't pfand. In 2011, I went to the Venice Beach Boardwalk with dozens of empty wine bottles I had painted. They were now flower vases, and I was excited to participate in the grand tradition of hocking my wares to the passerby. I didn't sell very many "vases," but couldn't pull the form from my system. I've been using wine bottles as a surface for painting, or frame for photography ever since.

This past August, I went to the Hard Rock Cafe in Berlin. I knew it was maybe the only place I could get lunch in Berlin without running into someone I know, especially since it was summer, the time when New Yorkers flood the city. I love the privacy of Mönchengladbach and the last thing I wanted was to see someone from New York City. The sign outside the Hard Rock, pointing towards the entrance said, "Why Limit Happy to an Hour?" Inside, clothing once worn in legendary stage performances was hung within gilt frames on the walls. With their host bodies long gone, but their music pumping through the speakers, I knew I was in the right place.

Rock n roll, forever.

—Whitney Claflin

*Why Limit Happy to an Hour?* concludes Claflin's six-month studio residency as a scholarship holder of the City of Mönchengladbach and the Josef and Hilde Wilberz Foundation. All of the works in this exhibition were created during this time in Mönchengladbach.

Whitney Claflin (b. 1983, Providence, RA, United States) currently lives and works in Mönchengladbach. She graduated from the Yale School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut. The artist's work recently had been on view in solo exhibitions at Drei, Cologne (with Rochelle Feinstein, 2022); Derosia, New York (2021); Drei, Cologne; Soft Opening, London (both 2020), Real Fine Arts, New York (2017). She furthermore recently contributed to exhibitions at Derosia, New York; Layr, Vienna; Drei, Cologne; Bel Ami, Los Angeles; Office Baroque, Antwerp (all 2023); Drei, Cologne (curated by Whitney Claflin); Clearing, Brussels (both 2022); Sandy Brown, Berlin (2021); Shoot the Lobster, New York (2020); Galerie Buchholz, New York (2019); Croy Nielsen, Vienna; Greene Naftali, New York (both 2018) a.o.