

KIRCHGASSE i am see

3.12. – 25.02.2023

The contributions by Caroline Bachmann, Monika Baer, Jochen Lempert, Mark von Schlegell and Bea Schlingelhoff are carefully selected and arranged so that they speak to each other like a collection of self-contained and coherent short stories (Werk-Stories). This correspondence is situated on the thin borderline drawn by the title *i am see* and turns to you in a rotating movement that, as long as it circles, simultaneously shows both sides *i am at the lake* (site-specific) and *i am seeing* (sight-specific)!

“The five stories in this collection really are short stories (...). I’ve included a brief afterword with each story. I like the idea of afterwords rather than individual introductions since afterwords allow me to talk freely about the stories without ruining them for readers.” (From Preface of: *Bloodchild and other stories* by Octavia E. Butler (1947-2006)).

Inspired by this self-commenting method of science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler, we would like to allow ourselves to write the descriptive and explanatory part of the invitation text in the form of an afterword (without ruining them [Mark von Schlegell’s two excerpts] for readers).

[from] THE PRINTED *SEE*...

After a moment of breathing, she rushed to the parapet. Far below, electricity flashed upon all the surface of the *See*. The ruddy bay blinked. And then for a moment the world she stood against was inflamed in green.

(--*Nice. --Wicked indeed...*)

Egge tapped goggles. The view returned to normal, but something she saw, he saw, had changed. He lowered precious, and walked quietly forward to see.

It was most irregular for him to do so, and made precious ever so warm. To the south, he saw crowds already gathering along the old waterfront to look at the transformed water edging their city’s bubble. The pale and ratlike wastrels laughed, pointed and shouted, many of them unhelmeted and bare-skinned. Egge could now make out what they were seeing.

Egge frowned in that way like a smile, stroking the itchy soft hair of the chinny chin chin.

(--*Oh shit. Here it comes...*)

Was it true? The *See* was flattened, transformed into text, white on black, rolling out, spilling tendrils, letters expanding and contracting in weird eddies. Even so, it was clear this was printed. Entire lines of words maintained themselves in the foam that crossed and bubbled the quietly roiling surface.

(--*Was it the hypercube that did that? (UPDATE: So that’s how that happened? TIL...)*)

Egge, naturally, could read what it said on the *See*. Nobody, none of those outside now, even the ones with exolungs, certainly not Tango Hambly herself, still leaning out gazing, could read those words. The alien script of a now useless, unremembered tongue, pointlessly yet relentlessly inhering to the ever-changing surface of *Big Little See* gave the words of the lost poem, entirely unreadable to them all, incoherence.

And all the sheeple pointed, marveled at the printed *See*.

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«It's Henry,» Tango Hambly said, not turning around. «His last post-script.»

She looked good against the chaos. Precious took her like that.

The shot angled through the hippocampus, with slivered precision, directly out the eye -- piercing her life with artistic resonance..

(--Wait a minute! Tango?? WTF!!! Nooooooooo...)--

And the words upon the See began to change...

REMEMBER HOPPIES IF YOU SEE AN EGGE OUT THERE IN THE WILDERNESS GIVE AN EGGE A HAND. INFORM!

.....

Camille Flammarion had been publishing his celebrated list of «Principal Star Clusters and Nebulae» even as RR was putting together *L'Étoile* au Front from meticulous language experimentation. By the time RR composed *La Poussière de Soleils*, the actual astronomer had solved the mystery of so-called «Messier Objects,» the puzzle that had haunted the Enlightenment ever since eighteenth century stargazer Charles Messier completed his hyper-empirical list of unexplainable specks in the French sky. With twentieth-century telescopes, privileged Flammarion found these «transient objects» were neither wandering stars, comets, or planets. In fact, they included «8 open clusters, 5 planetary nebulae, 1 diffuse star forming nebula, 2 parts of a supernova remnant (the Veil nebula), and 2 galaxies.»

Under this expansive new sense of transience the lovers at the end of *La Poussière*, in what should be a happy ending, will find themselves engaged in an altogether new sort of universe. Reaching back through the history of the stage to «star-cross'd» Romeo and Juliet, Solange, though she is now richer than a queen, faces the fact that her lover Jacques is headed to his own separate destiny.

And can't we choose a star, a constellation, that we can gaze on at the same time so as to make of it a kind of link between us?

JACQUES: A Star...? A constellation...? I've got something better to propose. Look up there at that nebula. Can you think of what it might be compared to?

SOLANGE: No.

Culminating a series of negations, this is what might be called a pregnant no. But a human one, and a rare point of dramatic possibility on the Rousselian stage.

Solange might well take some offense. Notably, Jacques not only rejects the star but also rejects the constellation, and with it the metaphorology with which Walter Benjamin and Theodore Adorno would define «the dialectical image.»¹ He also rejects an earlier RR....

[from] RR: No Constellation...

¹ „Ideas are to things as constellations to stars. This is to say, first of all: they are neither their concepts nor their laws. They do not serve the knowledge of phenomena, and in no way can the latter be the criterion determining the existence of ideas. Rather, the meaning of phenomena for ideas is exhausted in their conceptual elements...” -- Walter Benjamin *Origin of the German Trauerspiel*, (1925).

i am see is an exhibition that in many ways continues in the vein of last year's exhibition *constellations in a bubble*. We are interested in whether the counterpart to the constellation and the bubble is the site-specific fog that rises over Lake Constance, and whether this masks the view of the other side of the lake. Often obscured by the veil are the backgrounds of the construction, which are lifted when things get personal. Structures of otherwise unspoken framings that keep the enterprise flowing, shine in the space between. Edgings and banks that see, that focus and surround the seeing on a segment, that evoke stories of the site, help to navigate. A haze-generating surface that is flow and text, bursts into rain and language. Encompassing animals and image-made image-drops strand on the divided margins of the local and time-specific environment. Are relationships once forged connections that become conventions or do they collectively form a living cloud that cannot be seen as long as one is in it?

The familial nebula is stored on meadow, wall and lake, before the how-see of the sight-ways. Star constellations and lakeside surfaces are both for our seeing planes that vibrate, conjure up and reflect very differently.

This concerns the commentary approach towards *i am see*. The five artists are shown together for the first time in an exhibition; all works were created or recontextualized especially for this exhibition; and all artists have a personal relationship with rivers and lakes.

For the artist **Caroline Bachmann** the lake is the central motif of her paintings. In her distinctive visual language, developed over the last 15 years, seeing the lake, through a painted frame, and inverted: seeing the frame, through the natural, symbolic, painterly transcendence of the lake, becomes a question of the active positioning of the spectator. So it is no surprise that for her it includes the stimulating communication of images in the group, the common teaching of art and the critical questioning of one's point of view alla "Étant donnés" as part of the reciprocal relationship with and of images.

Selected Exhibitions: Crédac, Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry sur Seine (2023); Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zürich (2023); Skys, Lakes and Mountains, Duane Thomas Gallery, New York (2022); Le matin, Meyer Riegger, Karlsruhe (2022); 58 av. J.-C., Kunsthaus Glarus (2020)

In **Monika Baer's** exhibitions, the image, especially the painting and its inner and outer conditions, is the starting point of her considerations. The meticulous way she argues in and with paintings turns them into a magnifying glass for forensic image examinations at the crime scene exhibition. Every decision in and for a painting has its place and reason. Before the precise operation, it often lies entombed in painting-specific, personal and psychological patterns, without suggesting the hierarchical structures of before and after or true and false. Monika Baer paints only the images she wants to paint and to see, in order to enter into a delicately elaborated communication with the history of the painting(s) and its audience, an *inSiteout-specific image-argumentation* emerges.

Selected Exhibitions: Fun Feminism, Kunstmuseum Basel (2022); Am Rhein, Kunsthalle Bern (2021); loose change, Greene Naftali, New York (2021); Neue Bilder, Hannah Höch Preis 2020, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.) (2020); Dieter Krieg Foundation Preis, Kunstmuseum Bonn (2019).

Jochen Lempert transforms through his photographs images into vivid moments of roaming for motifs; converts the centimetre-precise eye for the details into individual images; and inverts groups of images into swarms communicating within and between themselves, provoking unseen interactions. All this without losing perspective of the site-specific situation, whether behind the analogue camera or in front of the exhibition wall. A flip movement of seeing and being seen permeates his work. Surprising similarities trigger a web with chains of associations and interwoven backstories. The investigation of everyday sight becomes an experience of subtle pictorial relationships that embody their origins and the contexts of their emergence to incorporate them organically into their display.

Selected Exhibitions: Natural sources, Huis Marseille Museum for Photographie Amsterdam (2022); j|, Centre Pompidou Paris (2022); Jochen Lempert, Portikus Frankfurt (2022); Parlament der Pflanzen, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2021); Sea Level, Feuilleton, Los Angeles (2020).

Mark von Schlegell enables the realities of seeing in his science fiction novels and texts to tumble into one another so that without losing any of their suspense, they are thrust into their surface, on which they turn over into delicate undulations. Arriving at the shore of an exhibition, the specific occurrence also resides for him on the other side, on relating to and reflecting on given locations and narratives. Whether the story is set on Venus, Mercury, the deserted Earth, Neptune or Pluto the local conditions directly influence the style of writing and the upcoming exhibition. The art of the future is fictional. Press releases are planetary situations that, in a Rousselian (RR) spirit, provide a link to the here and now. The lake is printed. The installation of a science-fiction-book-rack contextualizes the exhibition on another level. Watercolours of maps and book covers influence and draw lines through the space to bend it into other realities, scenes and settings.

Selected Exhibitions and Lectures: Pure Fiction - Shifting theatre: Sibyl's mouths. An Exhibition at the End of Performance, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2022); REAL/ BOOKS, Jan Kaps, Cologne (2020); Urthworks (Three Films by Ben Rivers, written by Mark von Schlegell), Hestercombe Gallery, Somerset (2020); Soul of the White Ant. Lecture in honor of Ron Nagle: Euphoric Recall exhib. Fridericianum, Kassel (2019);

Selected Publications: Ickles, Ad Infinitum. New York: Inpatient Press. 2019; Sundogz; Semiotext(e). 2015; Mercury Station: a transit. Semiotext(e). 2009; High wichita. [Kbh.]: KBH Kunsth. 2006; Venusia. Semiotext(e). 2005; Realometer: uncovering discovery in American literature. Thesis (Ph. D.)-New York University, Graduate School of Arts and Science. 2000.

Bea Schlingelhoff explores the places where she exhibits by bringing social, personal, political and historical structures into the centre of institutional interest. She transfers and transforms the conditions and contingencies she finds in such a way that visitors to the exhibition cannot avoid seeing and questioning these conditions as artistic work. She is interested in the conditions that constitute an artistic work before and potentially after its elaboration within an exhibition space.

In her work *zur Hoffnung*, the storage room of the Kirchgasse gallery is cleared out and illuminated. As a connection to the exhibition space, the name of the house in which the gallery is located "Zur Hoffnung", which is already painted on the side of the house, is reproduced and written above the entrance to the storage room. All artistic works normally deposited there, such as wrapped paintings, drawings and sculptures by the gallery's artists (or friends), but also folders, posters, tables, etc. will

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be stored in the gallery space. The floorplan of i am see declares the entire content of the storage room to be artistic work by Bea Schlingelhoff. Thus, questions of economic and interpersonal relations, regulations and dependencies are raised anew during the exhibition period. How and under what conditions can the gallery best sell the originally stored artistic works now, who is the author of the work and who gets the money?

Selected Exhibitions: Declined Declinations, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2022); No River to Cross, Kunstverein München (2021); The Ocean, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway (2021); Sommer des Zögerns, Kunsthalle Zürich (2020); Maskulinitäten, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Köln, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2019); PAX, Kunsthhaus Glarus (2019); Auftrag, Istituto Svizzero, Milan (2017).

The conception, communication and curation of the exhibition was a collaboration between Anne Gruber and Philipp Schwalb.