

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, 11 MARCH 2011

6 pm Opening with Regina Wyrwoll, General Secretary of the Art Foundation NRW, Jörg Stüdemann, councillor in charge of cultural affairs of the city of Dortmund and Inke Arns, Curator and Artistic Director, Hartware MedienKunstVerein

SATURDAY, 12 MARCH 2011

4 pm Guided tour of the exhibition with Barbara Breitenfellner (Artist, Berlin) and Inke Arns, Curator and Artistic Director, Hartware MedienKunstVerein

SATURDAY, 9 APRIL 2011

4 pm Talk with Barbara Breitenfellner (Artist, Berlin), Jens Emil Sennewald (Art Critic, Paris) and Ute Vorkoeper (Art Historian, Hamburg)

Thursdays at 6 pm (after-work guided tour) and Sundays at 4 pm the HMKV offers a free guided tour of the exhibition with the purchase of an entrance ticket.

COLOPHON

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Design: RADAU! – Gestaltung

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DORTMUNDER U
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UND KREATIVITÄT

HMKV

Hartware MedienKunstVerein

BARBARA BREITENFELLNER

DREAM

OF AN EXHIBITION

12 MARCH *till* 05 JUNE

2011

HMKV AT DORTMUNDER U

www.hmkv.de



WWW.DORTMUNDER-U.DE

/// 1 Jens Emil Sennewald, 'Ins Bild gebannt: Barbara Breitenfellners unheimliche Räume', in: Kunstbulletin, 12.2006, <http://www.kunstbulletin.ch/router.cfm?a=0b116119321M52-2>.
/// 2 Recorded on 12 May 1999 and implemented in 2008 at Autocenter, Berlin. // 3 See Guy Debord, 'The Society of the Spectacle' [1967] (London: Rebel Press Dark Star, 1993).
/// 4 See Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytical Experience' [1949], 'The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud' [1957] and 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' [1953], in *Écrits: A Selection*, transl. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp. 1-7, pp. 146-78, pp. 30-113. // 5 Gerda Pagel, *Lacan zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junfermann, 1991), p. 14.

Barbara Breitenfellner's artistic practice bears witness to the fact that we live in a culture evolution of society in a world radically altered and increasingly dominated by new media and technology. In Breitenfellner's installations this change is evidenced by the mysterious dream-scapes and scenes from which the artist develops her work. Her collages and installations explore the colonisation of our (sub)consciousness by the prefabricated mass media image-ry of the 'society of the spectacle' – images from film, magazines, TV shows and advertisement showing clichéd lifestyles, stereotypical social categories and commendable behaviour. But as pervasive influence of media imagery, so do our dreams. Drawing on the material provided by her dreams, Barbara Breitenfellner's works reveal the radical eccentricity of the subject. As observed by Jacques Lacan, this double, or even triple, decentering of the subject "expresses" itself in the circumstance that it is never the subject as such that speaks but always already someone or something else. The subject is initiator of its conscious relation to the world; rather, language is the decisive agent [...] through which it speaks and is spoken. The "scandal" of Lacan grounds precisely in this radical subversion of the subject – a subject in the context of Breitenfellner's dream notes, cannot rely on its "own", "authentic" imagery, but only on "strange" imagery that manifests itself in various constellations. The images, which are called up in dreams, combined and often "dislocated" against the "normal" chronology in complex "filmic" sequences, are therefore deeply uncanny.

ON THE EXHIBITION

/// 6 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' [1919], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. & transl. James Strachey, vol. XVII (London: Hogarth, 1953), pp. 219-52. // 7 Michael Foucault, 'Dream, Imagination and Existence', in Ludwig Binswanger, *Dream and Existence* [1954] (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1965), pp. 1-19. // 8 'Original published in 1985 as vol. XIX, no. 1 of *Review of existential psychology & psychiatry*. The work by Michel Foucault translated here from the French appeared originally as an introduction to the French translation by Jacqueline Verdau.

According to Sigmund Freud, the uncanny is 'nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression', something estranged which suddenly returns: 'the uncanny [...] is something which is secretly familiar [...] which has undergone repression and then returned from it'. It is the 'repetition of the same thing', from the 'involuntary repetition which surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere'. In Breitenfellner's collages this observation applies equally to the role of animals (eagle, bat, foal, horses, young cats), which entertain curiously hybrid relations with people, and to a range of mostly analogic media (books, photography, tape recorder with headphones, magazines, comic strips) which seem to fulfil an obscure mission beyond their obvious function. Each collage could further-more be interpreted in terms of its relation to the history and theory of media. 'The poet abides by the orders of his night' – Foucault's expansive introduction to the French translation of Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, a book which has been a companion of the artist for many years. Like Foucault's poet, Barbara Breitenfellner is strangely present and absent from her works. On the one hand she acts as a "recipient of orders", a medium communicating her dreams in all their pictorial density and strangely consistent existence. Following this line of thought, the interpretation of the dreams as such is 'irrelevant or, if it is to be carried out, it must be done very carefully, associatively, solitarily, as though walking in one's sleep, so as not to override the peculiar Wesen befallen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!' // 10 Recorded on 29 August 2010. // 9 The original title is Höhere Wesen befallen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!

ON THE EXHIBITION

DREAM:

1 EXHIBITION IN 1 BIG MUSEUM. IT WASN'T CLEAR WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO SHOW MY WORK (WHAT WAS MY WORK ANYWAY?). IN 1 LARGE SPACE: THE OIL PAINTINGS WERE ALL HANGING HIGH UP ON THE WALLS. THE FLOOR OF THE MUSEUM WAS COVERED WITH 1 PSYCHEDELIC ZIGZAG CARPET. ON THE CARPET STOOD A FAT SPORTS CAR LIKE A PLUMP BRONZE SCULPTURE.

Dream text on wall, slanted ramp, 7 x 5 x 2,5 – 0 m, zigzag carpet, wrecked silver-coloured Porsche 911 Carrera 993, ca. 20 framed oil paintings, colour-painted wall; produced by Hartware MedienKunstVerein Dortmund, 2011



The bare walls in this space, which were built from the remaining parts of previous exhibitions, refer to the constructed nature of the situation. This dream is a “quirky” and simultaneously explicit reference to Joseph Beuys’s action *I Like America and America Likes Me*, which took place from 21 to 25 May 1974 at René Block Gallery in New York. As part of this exhibition, Beuys spent several days alone in a room with a coyote.¹⁴ In Barbara Breitenfellner’s installation a figure in a gorilla costume wearing Beuys’s characteristic fishing vest with a triangle attached to it sits on top of a hydraulic platform. The room furthermore holds a bear mask and boxing gloves, while a hare mask and a hare fur coat are hanging on the wall around the corner. In Breitenfellner’s dream Beuys, rather than entering into a dialogue with the sacred animal of American native peoples as in *I Like America ...* or communicating with a dead hare as in *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965)¹⁵, is pictured appearing alongside a gorilla – a highly ambivalent animal, a ‘symbol of alterity, strangeness and horniness as well as destruction’¹⁶. It remains equally unclear which of the two protagonists in this three-dimensional staging of the artist’s dream is in control over the other: Beuys or the gorilla? Are they merely one and the same person? Or are we simply contemplating empty dressing or costuming options? Breitenfellner deliberately avoids staging a performance, presenting a static figure which, similar to a (popular) science exhibit, ‘is rather reminiscent of the overly mediated Beuys from Madame Tussauds’ wax figure cabinet’¹⁷. The room, which is lit by

DREAM:

BEUYS WAS GIVING A SEVERAL-DAYS-LONG PERFORMANCE IN 1 ROOM. SOMEONE ELSE (?) STEPPED ON 1 LYING GORILLA WITH 1 FUR LYING ON A PLATFORM: IT WAS A FRAME THAT WAS MOVING UPWARDS. AT THE END BEUYS JUMPED DOWN LIKE A WINNER IN A CIRCUS.

the 60z bulbs of a light wall reminiscent of fairs and variety shows, holds several circus podiums and a tightrope frame, its floor littered with straw. The sound of turbines – alluding to the recordings used by Beuys in *I Like America ...* – alternates with the canned laughter of sitcoms. The peculiar temporality of Beuys’s performances is not reflected by the acting persona but by the “animated” light wall and the changing sound. This externalisation is in itself a truly uncanny translation. */// Inke Arns*

/// 14 For a detailed description of the event, see Götz Adriani et al., *Joseph Beuys* (Cologne: Dumont, 1994), pp. 141ff. */// 15* The original title is *Wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt*. */// 16* The artist in an interview with Jens Emil Sennewald in the catalogue, *Barbara Breitenfellner: Traum einer Ausstellung*, HMKV, Dortmund 2011. */// 17* Ibid.

The museum is an uncanny place *par excellence*. Its strangeness derives from the nature of its collections, an accumulation of lifeless things (just think of the exhibits in science or natural history departments) which threaten to come (back) to life at night or – in the case of face casts or death masks – might have retained some of the originals’ liveliness”. At the same time, looking at these objects, displays and exhibits of various origins, one is subtly confronted with the question of the artist’s identity. The centre of Breitenfellner’s installation is held by a sports car sitting on a slanted ramp whose wooden substructure lies bare. The ramp is covered in a zigzag carpet with a psychedelic pattern – a deliberate reference to David Lynch’s cult TV series *Twin Peaks* (1990 – 1991)¹².

Dream text on wall, light wall with 60z bulbs, hydraulic platform, circus podiums, tightrope frame, mannequin, gorilla costume, fur coat (hare), bear and hare mask, boxing gloves, fishing vest, triangle, straw, sound of turbines and sitcoms; produced by Hartware MedienKunstVerein Dortmund, 2011

The sloped construction, along with the upside-down pictures that elude the viewer’s gaze, refers to the fact that in dreams the laws of nature such as gravity, space and time are mostly abolished. While the description of this dream simply mentioned a ‘sports car’, the artist confronts us with the spectacular wreck of a Porsche. By taking such liberties with the instructions, the artist alludes to another film, David Cronenberg’s *Crash* (1996), which tells the story of a group of people who draw sexual pleasure from car accidents. This film, states the (German language) *Dictionary of International Film*, ‘is an excursion into the morbid perversion of lust which reduces the values of consumerism to absurdity, coolly staged as a meaningless ritual.’¹³ It remains unclear whether in this context the ‘crash’ refers to the crisis of art or that of the art market, particularly since the artist unmasks the pretence of her ambition to create accurate representations of dreams, in all their pictorial density and elusive existence: upon entering the exhibition, visitors find themselves in the “backstage” area, an interstice between two installations, where they see the bare cables of the light wall from the Beuys room and the backside of the podium supporting the slanted ramp with the car wreck. Here, the makeshift construction of the entire installation becomes blatantly obvious. */// Inke Arns*

/// 11 See for instance the film comedy *Night at the Museum* (dir. Shawn Levy, USA, 2006). */// 12* One of the scenes in the film takes place in a red room with a zigzag carpet. In one of his dreams, special agent Dale Cooper encounters the (dead) Laura Palmer and a dwarf who talks and dances in a funny way. (The movements and dialogues were acted out backwards and are played back in reverse.) The excerpt can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guwltwoyFGk&feature=related>. */// 13* *Lexikon des internationalen Films*. Online version at <http://www.zweitausendeins.de/filmlexikon/?wert=68525&sucheNach=titel>. The film is based on J. G. Ballard’s eponymous novel from 1973.

CABINET OF PRINTS AND COLLAGES 2005 – 2011

Similar to her installations, Barbara Breitenfellner’s collages are grounded in the a-logical, brutal, erotic and grotesque world of dreams, where images cancel each other out, leaving nothing but uncertain traces in our memories. Countless images from books on naturism, fighting dogs, occultism, skiing resorts or painting supplies

are piling up in the artist’s studio. By overprinting, cutting out, inverting and assembling these images in seemingly random order, she plays with the pitfalls of our subconscious and thus mirrors the mechanisms of dreams, where one disturbing image chases the other.

