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> Kerstin Cmelka
Kunst und Lebensform
(Art and Life Form)
08.06. –
25.07.2013

Opening
07.06.2013
8 p.m.

> The Graz-based playwright and dramatist Wolfgang Bauer coined the term “microdrama” for plays that often approximate the filmic with their brevity and hardly realisable stage directions, though he always rejected the idea of actually filming the pieces. This dramatic form, which—merely conceived as text—eludes performability, thus subverts the boundaries of theatre. An interest in filigree subversion and an exploration of work evincing fractures are posited at the centre of Kerstin Cmelka’s eclectic, multimediatic re-stagings of historical material taken from film, art, and theatre in her solo exhibition at the Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien (KM–). The involvement of fellow artists in these re-stagings leads to (re-)doubling in the construction of a usually fragile complicity with the viewers. The newly negotiated assertions, apparent here, between the poles of art and life are shown to overlap, and a reflexive meta-commentary on exceedingly free interpretation is always also staged as well.

What is more, the determinacy of historical templates—in confrontational contrast with repetitions enacted by the representational “amateurs” and in inhabiting additional levels—aims to answer these questions: How might the liberation of the gaze trained on the things between art and privateness come about? Which originally intended moments of utopia are of apparent continued relevance?

A sculptural display in the form of a sofa ensemble, which gesturally thematises and reflexively extends a general invitation to the exhibition audience, makes possible the achronological and rotative viewing of Cmelka’s current video works:

The film “Art and Life”, composed of three different and separate sequences, shows an artsy Viennese couple arguing while journeying by car, a short silent-film sequence, and an interview segment connoting a therapeutic setting. The individual scenes echo reenactments of cinematic and television films from the 1970s. The silent sequence, for example, simulates the ORF performance of the singer Nina Hagen on the Austrian talkshow “Club 2”, where the musician scandalously demonstrated female masturbation during heterosexual intercourse. In the psychotherapeutic conversation, in turn, Cmelka facilitates an authorship of illusory ambiguousness, both in front of and behind the camera.

In “The Individualists”, four of Cmelka’s friends and fellow artists— Jordan Wolfson, Dan Posten, Anke Weyer, and Alexis Hyman—reenact three different interview scenes from television and YouTube while following the transcription as a script. Two are historical: an excerpt from “52 Bond Street”, a 1970s interview series that David Byrne realised in his flat on Bond Street, featuring various artists, such as the twenty-five-year-old Jeff Koons; further, a hotel-room interview between Bianca Jagger and the thirty-year-old Steven Spielberg after one of his first film premieres. A third interview is shown, in a contemporary context: Dr Laura Schlessinger, a TV and radio lifestyle consultant, introducing her current book *Surviving a Shark Attack on Land* on morning television.

All three templates share a propensity for the supernatural: ghosts in television static, radio reception in dental fillings in the Spielberg scene, hyper-metaphorical city names as symbols of affective states in the Koons clip, and metaphorical imagery that

slips into the surreal and the absurd. Moreover, the three video recordings have been edited with a heavy hand, so that individual scenes transition into one another while similarities in space and content, simultaneities, and the absurdity of their narrative are enhanced.

The exhibition Kunst und Lebensform (Art and Life Form), which spans both spatial levels of the KM– venue and is opening with a live theatre performance, will be accompanied by the artist's first monographic catalogue published by the Verlag für moderne Kunst (Nuremberg) in cooperation with the Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof (Hamburg).

On 7 June a free shuttle service will be offered as part of the CMRK exhibition openings at Camera Austria, < rotor >, Grazer Kunstverein, and KM– (all exhibitions will have extended opening hours on this day from 6–10 p.m.): departure Vienna, 3 p.m., Opera, IKEA parking lot; return departure, Graz, 11:30 p.m., KM–, Burgring 2.

Performance: "Change" 07.06.2013, 8.30 p.m.

Theater performance by Kerstin Cmelka after Wolfgang Bauer featuring Manuel Gorkiewicz, Hanno Millesi, Christian Wallner & Thomas Draschan

An Art Day's Night:

Lecture: Tom Lamberty, Merve Verlag, 13.06.2013, 7 p.m.

Lecture: Adrian Williams, "Can't find my glasses without my glasses" /

Catalogue presentation: 27.6.2013, 7 p.m.

Curators talk: 11.07.2013, 7 p.m.

Press talk: 07.06.2013, 1 p.m.

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Press download: www.km-k.at



Kerstin Cmelka, Kunst und Lebensform (Art and Life Form), 2013



Kerstin Cmelka, Who's afraid?/Final Fight, Performance for video with Hanno Millesi, digital video, 2 min/5 min, 2010



Kerstin Cmelka, Change, performance, Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, 2012



Kerstin Cmelka, Male!, 2012, C-print, 2012