

JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION PRESS

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NUMBER TWO: FRAGILE

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The second exhibition of works from the Julia Stoschek Collection bears the title Number Two: Fragile.

The exhibition focuses on corporeality in videos, installations and photography, an aspect of art that has been explored intensively since the 1960s and 70s, in particular within the genres of Body Art and Performance.

The 49 works in the show were selected to shed light on the themes of self-dramatisation, pain, transformation, physicality in the sense of a plasticity that can be experienced as a real, external phenomenon, and also fragility in a literal way. Although the exhibition is unified by these overarching themes, it also allows viewers to discern the positions of the individual artists, since most of them are represented by several pieces.

Artistic self-dramatisation is perhaps the show's most prominent theme. Thus *Art-Make-Up* documents a performance by Bruce Nauman in 1967 in which the artist's body seems to be transformed into a sculpture. The videos, which were originally shot on 16 mm film are showing Nauman's torso in full frontal position and was then overlaid with four different colours (white, pink, green and black) in a painstaking process.

Technological advances in film and video and the development of closed-circuit installations in the 1960s made it possible for artists to record their actions on film, to observe themselves in a mirror at the same time and even transfer the recordings in another room. Several other artists featured in the exhibition, such as Vito Acconci and Hannah Wilke, took advantage of the possibilities offered by this technology to expand the concept of sculpture.

Thus in one of her best-known performances, *Hannah Wilke Through the Large Glass*, the artist performs a striptease behind Marcel Duchamps' *Large Glass* in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In posing for the camera like a 1970s model, she exposes the stereotypical role of women in the art world of that day.

Women's presentation of themselves as artists and simultaneously as art objects is also a central theme in Katharina Sieverding's series of large-scale photographs from 1973, *Die Sonne um Mitternacht schauen*, and in Marina Abramovic's performance *The Onion* from the year 1996, in which she also suggests the experience of pain and explores the limits of her own physical endurance.

Painful and shocking in equal measure are the performances by Chris Burden, which document self-imposed ordeals verging on martyrdom in the cause of art. In his legendary work *Shoot* from 1971, Burden has someone shoot him in the arm; in *Through the Night Softly* (1973) the naked artist writhes his way out of a pile of broken glass with his arms tied.

A very special work featured in Number Two: Fragile is *The Killing Machine* by Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller, completed in 2007. Inspired by Franz Kafka's short story "In the Penal Colony", the installation makes a statement on capital punishment that is at once critical and

absurd. It is not film that takes centre stage here, as in the duo's earlier works, but rather a torture instrument reminiscent of an electric chair. Displayed in a self-contained room and accompanied by screeching violins, the work turns viewers into spectators of a horror scenario.

In *Happiness (finally) after 35,000 Years of Civilization (after Henry Darger and Charles Fourier)*, an animated digital video installation in wide-screen format, Paul Chan takes up the thread of his ongoing radical confrontation with politics and society. In his apocalyptic vision, a seemingly naive concept of paradise mutates into a horror scenario in a video-game aesthetic derived from the imagery of cult artist Henry Darger.

Terence Koh's installation *Snow White* was created specifically for Number Two: Fragile and is one of its highlights. The work's main feature is a cube of neon tubes suspended from the ceiling; their bright glare makes entering the room virtually unbearable. A glass coffin, porcelain chrysanthemums and a live performance recorded in the same room complete the opera-inspired, fairytale-like scenario.

Cheese (2007) and *Dough* (2005/06) by Mika Rottenberg are being shown together for the first time. Viewers can see Rottenberg's most recent work *Cheese* in a rough-hewn, walk-in "goat shed". The main protagonists are six sisters with long, Rapunzel-like tresses who have magic powers and can make cheese with their hair. Much like *Dough*, *Cheese* grapples with global themes such as the economy and working life in the post-industrial age. Using poetic imagery, Rottenberg repeats the production processes ad absurdum, incorporating the female body as a dynamic part of these processes and transporting viewers into a world that is at once comfortably familiar and bizarre.

Furthermore these artists are represented in the exhibition: **Peggy Ahwesh, Walead Beshty, Björk (Enzyklopedia Pictura), John Bock, Patty Chang, Jen DeNike, Nathalie Djurberg, Cheryl Donegan, Kate Gilmore, Douglas Gordon, Cao Guimarães, Alex McQuilkin, Nandipha Mntambo, Lutz Mommartz, Rob Pruitt, Adam Putnam, Pipilotti Rist, Tjorbørn Rødland, Rosemarie Trockel and Aaron Young.**

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have on the exhibition or on the Julia Stoschek Collection in general.

An exhibition catalogue will be published by Hatje Cantz Verlag in June 2009.

Press and Public Relations

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