



ULRIKE ROSENBACH
Priska Pasquer,
Cologne, Germany

Two prints show Elvis Presley as captured in Andy Warhol's 'Double Elvis' silkscreens (1963): feet apart, Colt gun drawn. But these are not works by Warhol. Superimposed over this picture, we see the twofold likeness of a woman identically dressed: feet apart, Colt gun drawn. The prints are a new edition of *Art is a Criminal Action*, a work originally made in 1969 by the German artist Ulrike Rosenbach. Although barely known to younger audiences, Rosenbach's work featured twice at documenta (1977 and 1987) and at the Venice Biennale (1980 and 1984). She was also included in the early feminist exhibition '1,000 Miles from Here', curated by Lucy Lippard in 1970. From 1964 to 1972, she was a student of Joseph Beuys at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where she engaged with feminist ideas from the outset – hence the title of this exhibition, 'Art Meets Feminism No. 1'. Yet despite her early prominence and radical practice, in recent decades Rosenbach has disappeared from public view.

As well as being among the pioneers of feminist art, Rosenbach was one of the first video artists. As early as 1973, she began using a video camera because the medium allowed her to better define her role as a woman artist and subject of her own art. It provided a dynamic way of challenging historical representations of women in European art, where they were often depicted as passive objects put on show by men, representations of the Madonna and of Venus. As John Berger writes in *Ways of Seeing* (1972): 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.' It thus became

Above
Ulrike Rosenbach, *Haarhauben* (Hairhood), 1969, coloured pencil, 22 x 18 cm

Opposite page

Above
Aldo Tambellini, *Neutro-Study of Internal Shapes and Outward Manifestations*, 1965–68, hand-painted glass slide

Below
Sol Calero, 'Interiores' (Interiors), 2017, installation detail

Rosenbach's goal, her obsession even, to claim the active role in her works. In Cologne, where she was living at the time, she also founded the School of Creative Feminism in 1976, a forerunner of later women's networks.

In one of her best-known performances, *Glauben Sie nicht, dass ich eine Amazone bin* (Don't Believe I'm an Amazon, 1975), Rosenbach superimposed her own portrait over a projection of the medieval artist Stefan Lochner's *Madonna im Rosenhag* (Madonna of the Rose Bower, c.1450), and then shot at this double portrait with fifteen arrows. This allowed her to play both parts: the active attacker and the passive Madonna. The stills and photographs from this performance, included in the Cologne show, are striking in their ambivalence: both passively submissive and active, aggressive and rebellious. Aggressiveness is a recurring theme in Rosenbach's work but, unlike some other feminist artists who turned their aggressiveness against themselves, hers took a political direction. She saw herself as part of a politically subversive movement – or, as the title of her Elvis print suggests: *Art Is a Criminal Action*.

'Art Meets Feminism No. 1' features almost all of Rosenbach's major works from the 1970s, including her video on Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c.1484), *Reflektionen über die Geburt der Venus* (Reflections on the Birth of Venus, 1976) and a painstaking reconstruction of the video installation *Die einsame Spaziergängerin* (The Lonely Walker, 1979), which deals with the myth of solitude in the work of the romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich. *The Image of Woman in the Postwar Period* (1994), a video wall originally made for the House of History in Bonn, has also been reconstructed in a digital version. The original installation consisted of 96 screens playing videos on the roles and representation of women in postwar Germany. As the museum's director at the time admitted, women as a theme were simply omitted from the museum's concept. After years of relative obscurity, it is high time for this representative exhibition of Rosenbach's video performances, photographs and subtle drawings. They have lost nothing of their freshness and topicality today – for better and perhaps, also for worse.

Noemi Smolik
Translated by Nicholas Grindell

SOL CALERO
Dortmunder
Kunstverein, Germany

In her past exhibitions, Berlin-based Venezuelan artist Sol Calero has often built functional rooms within installation environments: at London's Studio Voltaire it was a school ('La Escuela del Sur', The Southern School, 2015) at Kunsthaus Bregenz it was a spa ('La Sauna Caliente', The Hot Sauna, 2016–17) and, for her presentation at Art Basel Statements in 2016, a currency exchange ('Casa de Cambio'). Calero doesn't simply transpose these spatial models, but subjects them to a distinctive makeover that teems with bright, light tropical visual references while taking into account these spaces' social dimensions. Also common to Calero's exhibitions is a hidden emphasis on painting: while in some cases this is more conspicuous, in others it retreats behind the decorative function of the pictures that are placed within her spatial environments.

For 'Interiores' (Interiors), her show at Dortmunder Kunstverein, Calero employs once more this familiar vocabulary and emphasis on staging. The view through the Kunstverein's floor-to-ceiling windows into the exhibition space reveals an opulent three-dimensional tableau installed to be seen from the outside in. Entering the installation, the viewer's senses are overstimulated by the closely packed set-up, the diversity of materials and the stark colour contrasts. The temptation to submit to this carefree, feel-good atmosphere is powerful, especially since Calero doesn't make analysis easy, titling the entire exhibition as a single work: 'Interiores' (2017).

Once the initial effect of this presentation wears off, it gradually becomes clear how the installation was made: on a tile-effect PVC floor, the artist positioned various set elements, some recalling the shapes of palm fronds, others portraying playful tangles of South Pacific flora and tropical fruits. Their sensual softness and muted shades are reminiscent of Henri Matisse's cut-outs, while the staggered arrangement of the set walls resembles the layout of a Baroque picture-frame stage. This impression is amplified by a horizontal painted foliage border that hangs from the ceiling. Finally, Calero adds to this finely worked setting with ready-mades sourced from DIY stores: this emphasis on vernacular makeshift construction looks to another Latin American trademark (or cliché) that is deliberately foregrounded by the artist.

These ready-mades and painterly elements are linked by more than Calero's cultural associations, however. The artist deliberately filled her installation with gates, doors, windows, curtains, blinds and screens: all architectural modules