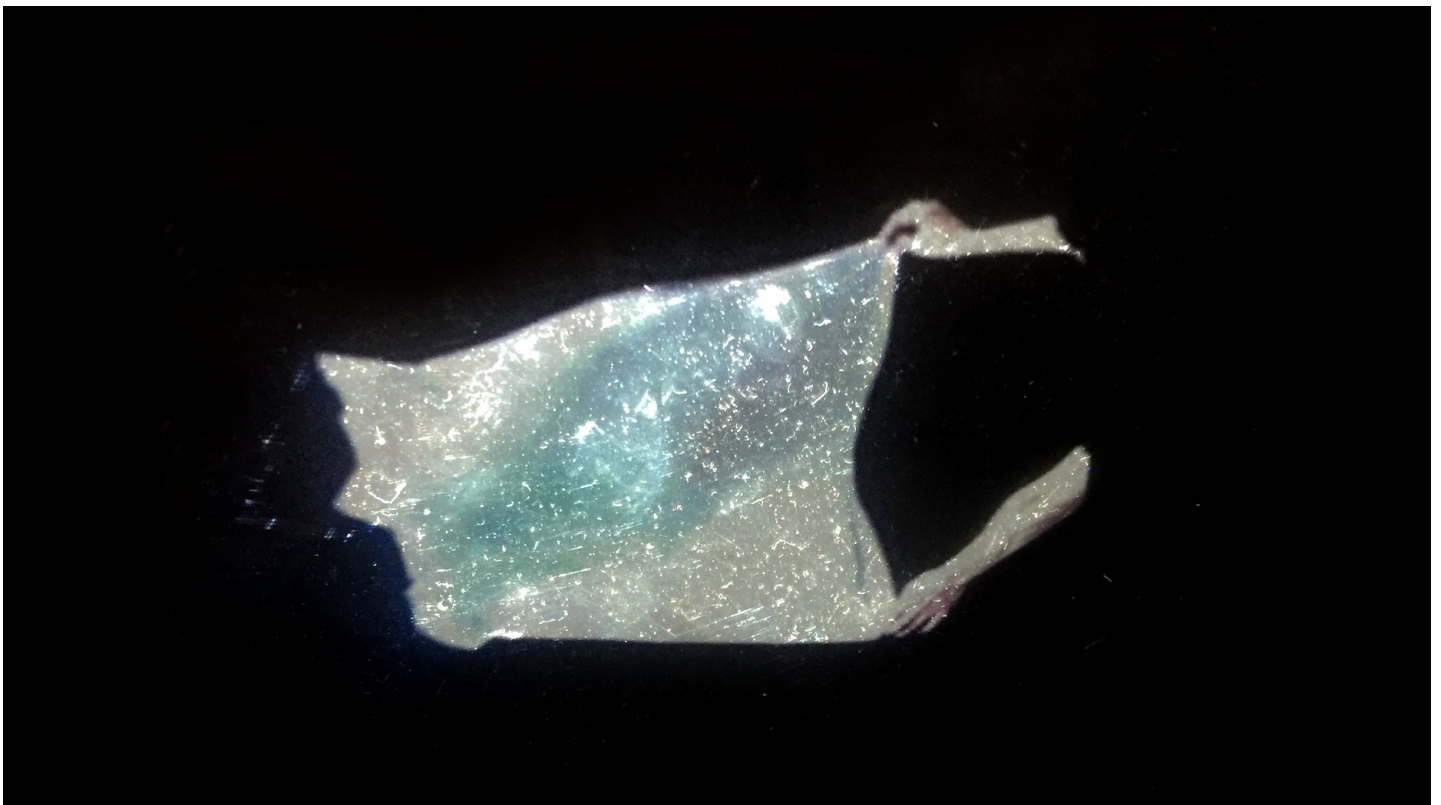


Johanna Reich

23 Feb — 7 Apr 2018 at the Priska Pasquer in Cologne, Germany

21 FEBRUARY 2018



Johanna Reich. Courtesy of Priska Pasquer

Parallel to the individual exhibition of Johanna Reich's works being held in the Max Ernst Museum in Brühl, Priska Pasquer is showcasing its own dedicated exhibition under the title *Simulacrum*. We have long been living in two worlds; the virtual world can be seen as the simulacrum of the physical world.

However, the two worlds have overlapped and influenced one another to such an extent that the current question appears to be whether the real world has not become a simulacrum of the simulacrum ... Identity or picture? Simulation, hyperreality, illusion or deception? In what kind of a world do we live and what pictures do we see?

If there were once limitations regarding the mechanical reproduction of picture material, these were swept away with the “digital revolution”. Since then, pictures have been disseminated through digital codes, but knowledge and culture are also constantly disseminated around the world in data form, these codes in turn giving rise to new pictures, the limitless dominance of which has ushered us into an unprecedented visual age. The basic question, which dates back to ancient times, regarding the relationship between real life and depiction, original and copy, appearance and reality, has changed greatly through the dematerialisation and codification of pictures, and continues to change at a breakneck pace in our post-digital world, where digital forms are not only accepted but expected as the norm. While copies cause confusion at reception level, at production level they are merely repetitions. On the other hand, there is no longer a clear distinction between picture, copy and reality today. Rather, since the digital revolution was declared by Nicholas Negroponte in 1998,

digital entities are no longer seen as reproductions but as a reality – a hyperreality – in their own right.

Born in Minden, Germany, in 1977, Johanna Reich has been exploring these very subjects for years in various ways through painting, video, performance, photography, sculpture and holographic projections. Her works have already been featured in individual or group exhibitions in Germany and abroad, including at the following institutions: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (2007), Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (2009), Kunsthaus Hamburg (2010), Stella Art Foundation, Moscow (2010) Kunst Werke Berlin (2010), Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (2010), Cobra Museum Amstelveen (2011), Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto (2011), Videonale 13, Kunstmuseum Bonn (2011), Museum für Konkrete Kunst Ingolstadt (2011), Arp Museum Rolandseck (2012), Kunsthaus Nürnberg (2013), Kunsthalle Münster (2013), Frankfurter Kunstverein (2013), Palais de Tokyo Paris (2014), Kunsthaus Düsseldorf (2014), Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl (2015), Clemes Sels Museum Neuss (2015), PRISKA PASQUER (2015), Kasseler Kunstverein im Friedericianum, Kassel (2016), Litfaßsäulen Köln, Cologne (2016), Istanbul Modern (2016), Priska Pasquer (2016), Äkkigalleria, Jyväskylä, Finland (2017), Q12 im MuseumsQuartier Wien, Vienna (2017),

Gislaved Konsthall, Sweden (2017), satellite project of the SkulpturProjekte Münster sculpture projects, Marl and LWL Münster (2017).

Johanna Reich's works are also regularly included at biennales and film festivals, such as Kunstfilmbiennale, Cologne (2009), Emscherkunst (2010), Cologne OFF (2011-13), Kassler Dokumentar- und Videofestival, Kassel (2013), Total Art Festival Berlin (2014) and DokFest Kassel (2016). Among other prizes, she has won the Nam June Paik Award (2006), the Japanese Excellence Prize for Media Art (2007), the Funding Award of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia for Media Art (2009), the Konrad von Soest Award (2011) and the LVR Culture Award (2017). These awards and exhibitions are an impressive indication of the relevance and standing of her art in the contemporary scene.

“Simulacrum”, the title of her exhibition at Priska Pasquer, symbolises her exploring the effectiveness of digital processes for picture production and dissemination. From a media theory perspective, the simulacrum is not a depiction but rather has a special position as a signal in its own right. According to Baudrillard, we live in an age of simulation in which the simulacrum manifests itself as hyperreality.¹ This definition accentuates the fact that the picture no longer serves as an

illustration of something else but is the sole carrier of meaning and therefore constitutes the message in itself. The signals that arise in such a world refer to nothing but themselves. Johanna Reich responds to this with a variety of questions and analyses. What happens if one were to deconstruct a picture in one's pure symbolic system, have it transferred by human hand and record it anew digitally? Which of the two pictures is the real one? What is reality in the first place? Who defines it and what shapes it? And who controls it? In search of answers, the artist asks young people, for whom the internet and its "like" culture are everyday reality, about their media icons and identification models. What serves as role models, how are they shaped and disseminated and in what way can they be manipulated? She also asks an older generation for pictures of memories, for pictures that have already established themselves and that have achieved a reality-shaping significance. As well as this, she trawls through analogue picture archives in search of discarded pictures, for documents of forgotten identities, which she puts online, giving them a new reality and a new lease on life.

Johanna Reich also explores and examines – not without irony – conditions and processes for depicting reality in painting and its pursuit of authenticity. For instance, by unveiling with a suitably grand gesture the picture on a canvas

as a piece of nature in a classic plein air painting or using drops of water to create a watercolour painting in which the sky and clouds compress to form a mirror, she creates very real snapshots, but it is only the reflected image of these that will survive through the film footage that is taken at the same time, rendering it infinitely reproducible. Which illusions does painting create? What space is given to the painter's gesture in connection with original, cult and genius? To what extent does the artist identify with the picture (motif) and to what extent is he or she wrapped up in the picture or even disappears completely? Even public space, which is far from being the same thing as space that is open to everyone equally, becomes a subject for discussion. What defines a public space? Who positions themselves here, who moves in this space and in what way? Which political and commercial players are given permission to monitor this movement? In which power rhetoric is the body therefore implicated? And how can it escape from this? What happens when the human body disguises itself, rendering itself invisible to the camera's technical eye? The artist has, in the form of performance art, been experimenting for years with her own body, with its visibility and perception and the various limitations of these. The body can respond to the monitoring, it can show or conceal itself, disappear, or escape control by

becoming invisible. However, this does not mean that it ceases to exist. Just as a black hole does not signify nothingness but rather an accumulation of mass, the body that conceals itself before the camera is still a body in action. If the technical medium fails in its documentary function, a picture still emerges – not a reflection, but a simulacrum.

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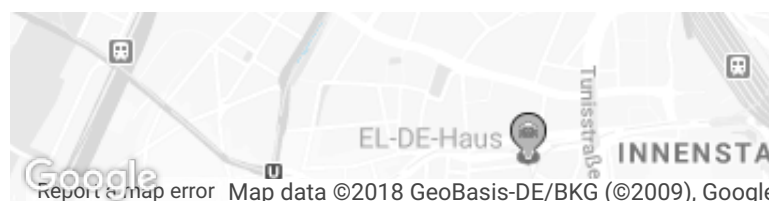
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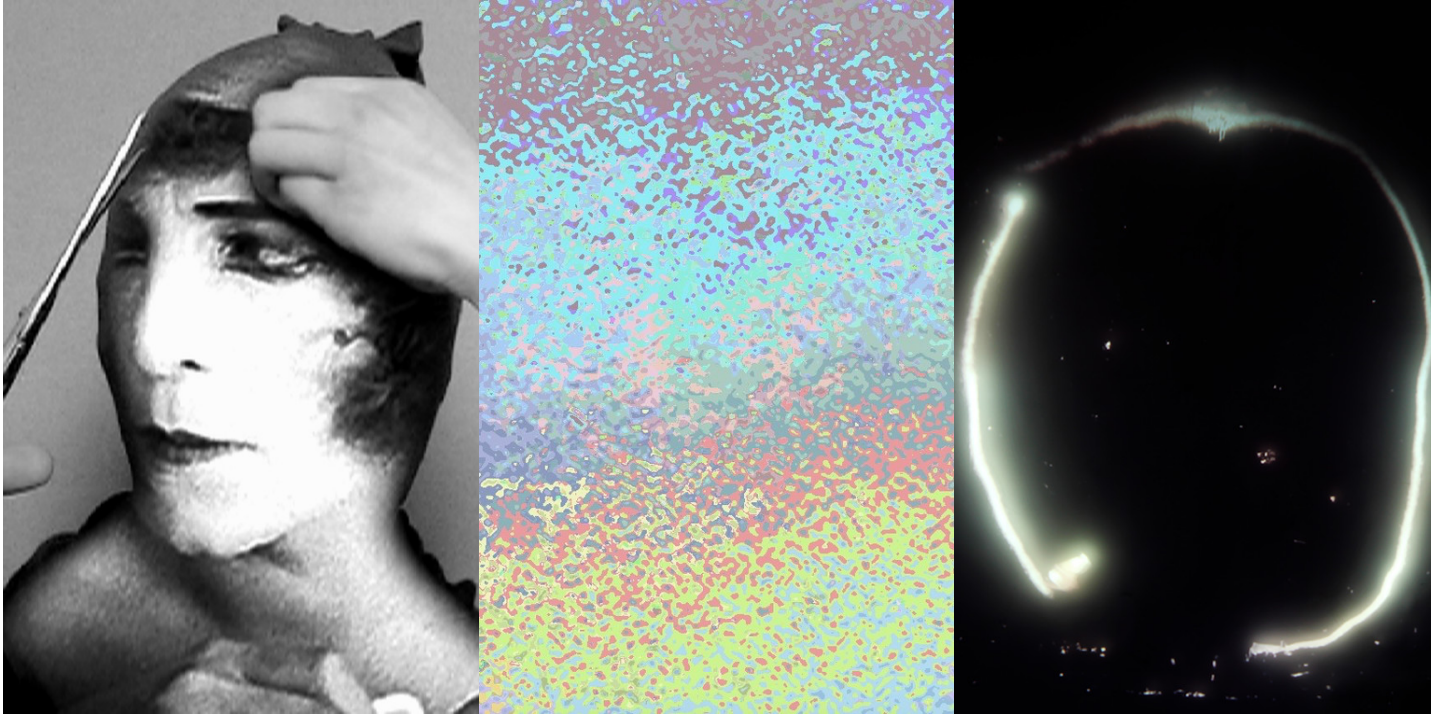
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Opening hours

Tuesday to Friday
From 11am to 6pm
Saturday from 11am to 4pm

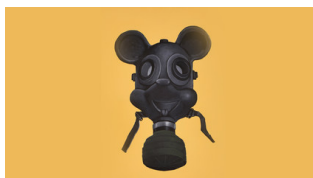




Captions

1. Johanna Reich. Courtesy of Priska Pasquer
2. Johanna Reich. Courtesy of Priska Pasquer
3. Johanna Reich. Courtesy of Priska Pasquer

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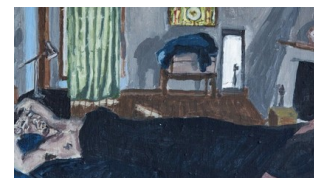
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