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Katharina Steidl arbeitet derzeit als Post-Doc an der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien (APART-GSK, ÖAW, AT). Ihre Arbeitsschwerpunkte liegen in der Geschichte und Theorie der Fotografie, Geschlechtergeschichte, Wissenschafts- und Materialitätsgeschichte.

Hervé Guibert: This and More

The Wattis Institute, San Francisco, 9. 6. – 30. 7. 2022

MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, 4. 3. – 21. 5. 2023

KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 9. 6. – 20. 8. 2023

by Jacob Korczynski

The chronology of this solo exhibition, which brings together twenty-eight silver-gelatin prints, begins in 1979 in the lead-up to the publication of *L'Image fantôme* (*Ghost Image*, 1981), Hervé Guibert's collection of essays on photography, and stretches over a decade until just after his death in 1991. This timeline is nearly concurrent with the one he lays out through text in what is perhaps his most iconic work, *À l'ami qui ne m'a pas sauvé la vie* (*To the Friend Who Did Not Save My Life*, 1990). The novel is an autofiction

ceeds a frame suffused with sexuality, as if we were adjacent to the aftermath of the encounter.

Elsewhere, when Guibert falls into the elegiac tone of the nature morte, his compositions can be cursory, as in the case of *Les billes* (The Marbles, 1983). Here, a medium shot frames the eponymous glass toys politely scattered across a sun-dappled seat, and the result feels inconsequential. *Les boules* (The Balls, 1985) captures a similarly lustrous assemblage of extant objects, with traditional Christmas ornaments laid out upon a table, many attracting the bright light overhead. But here, Guibert's formal decisions and proximity to his subject consciously interrupt the easy pleasures of portraiture. Taking an angle that has him leaning over the objects, the decorations closest to him are out of focus, and reflections collect across most of them. A pair of cutting pliers emerges from the far right-hand side of the frame, the sharp points of the tool facing toward the fragile keepsakes, and a visceral danger hums across the image.

The longer I spend with this photo, the more I see another threat present in the frame. Adjacent to decorations that take the form of the bell and two birds, an elephant ornament stands upon the same table. As memento of stolen life, a being is appropriated into a bibelot, the horror of colonial dispossession and state violence taking a kitschy souvenir form. In *La marionnettiste* (The Puppeteer, n. d.) an elephant appears again, this time suspended overhead from wires, awaiting com-

rate texts published in *Ghost Image*, Guibert addressed the way glass surfaces shape both our gaze and the ensuing images. In the text "Diffraction" he compares the series of mirrors at work in a Hasselblad viewfinder to the role of windows in providing an indirect opening to desire when cruising on the subway. The same space of public transportation is the primary setting of the text "Identity Photograph II," where Guibert asserts the opposite experience, actively working to refuse acknowledgment: "To avoid having to look at the person sitting opposite me, who was black, I sat down facing sideways in my seat."¹

His images are haunted by more than a single history. There is more than one face that looks back.

1 Hervé Guibert, *Ghost Image*, trans. Robert Bononno (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1996), p. 56.

Jacob Korczynski is a curator and a PhD candidate at the Malmö Art Academy (SE).

Meanings in Abeyance

B. Ingrid Olson: Elastic X

Secession, Vienna, 29. 6. – 4. 9. 2022

by Margit Neuhold

It takes time to decipher what you actually see: somewhat shifted from the center of the photograph is a reflective object—an aging but elegant trash can. The reflection reveals the photographer, but the area around the eyes, where she is holding the camera, has vanished in the object's fold. Below the chin, the shiny surface reflects her open crotch clad in dark pantyhose. In front of the sex, a curved tip protrudes into the picture. This sculptural collage, which B. Ingrid Olson set up, is situated against a background laid in stripes: a reddish-brown tiled floor, a creamy-white stripe in front of a mint-green wall, but also stripes that defy description. The photograph is bathed in warm light, with strict geometric reflections adding another pictorial layer to it.

The work's cantilevered white plexiglass frame juts into the room: on the one hand, this forces us to stand directly in front of the photograph to see the image in its entirety; on the other, this sculptural element provides intimacy. What is more, both the title and the installation of the work think the viewer's body along with it: *Perfect Spectator, perforation* (2021–22). A gray sculpture resembling a CCTV, installed low at a pelvic height, protrudes into the gallery space and echoes the sculptural qualities of the



Hervé Guibert, *Les billes*, 1983. Vintage gelatin silver print, 15.24 × 22.86 cm. Courtesy: Les Douches La Galerie, Paris.

chronicling the early years of the ongoing AIDS pandemic leading up to his own diagnosis, followed by the immediate aftermath.

But unlike Guibert's deeply corporeal texts, the images assembled here largely depart from the body in favor of an atmosphere of airless interiors. When figures do appear, they often arrive at the edge of the frame. As the title of *Deux pieds sur banquette* (Two Feet on Bench, 1981) reveals, the extremities that enter the composition from the bottom right corner and middle of the left side are, at a quick glance, a pair of bare feet. However, the nuance of Guibert's composition rewards further looking, and the two right feet reveal that it is not one person, but two people together. The sameness of the appendage asserts a queer presence in the most erotically charged image of the exhibition. Intimacy ex-

mands from above. With *La rêve du désert* (The Dream of the Desert, 1982) what looks to be a postcard of a camel in a depopulated landscape is self-consciously centered upon linen-draped furniture, a gesture that comes just twenty years after Algerian independence.

Upon exiting the exhibition, the last image I see is *Vertiges* (Vertigo, n. d.). Although figurative fragments collect along the borders in some of the other photographs, with this undated image they appear directly in the center of the composition. An open door frames a second, closed entranceway that includes a panel of frosted glass, lit evenly from behind. With features muted by the translucent pane, a disembodied face stares directly at us, the close proximity to the diaphanous material casting shadows across their countenance. Through two sepa-



B. Ingrid Olson: 323.

With a poem by Rosmarie Waldrop (eng.). Secession, Vienna; Revolver Publishing, Berlin 2022.

328 pages, 16 × 16 cm, 323 color illustrations.

€ 26.40 / ISBN 978-3-95763-523-5

photograph. The corresponding text, written by the curator Annette Südbeck for the exhibition *Elastic X*, starts out with “the question of what it means to see and to be seen” and unfolds the

The artist’s book accompanying the exhibition is titled *323*, revealing the number of photographs shown inside. It has a French binding and a cardboard cover showing only a black outline of a

Photography is thus a cognitive and cultural currency, so to speak, allowing us to continuously exchange knowledge, experiences, and emotions on a global scale. As praiseworthy as such a critical approach may be, it does not take away from the fact that currency — as usual within the framework of major art events — serves as a typical umbrella term. Moreover, of the twelve exhibitions at ten locations, only the large group shows at the Hall for Contemporary Art (Deichtorhallen Hamburg) and the Hamburger Kunsthalle refer to the overarching concept. In addition, two scattered individual artist interventions dialogue with colonial collectibles from the Hanseatic city’s municipal museums.

Among the highly diverse exhibitions in the triennial is one show at Hamburg’s Museum of Work on the visual iconography of key labor movements, as well as two shows dedicated to the effects of environmental disasters. *Flint is Family, Act III* at the Kunstverein in Hamburg presents the final part of LaToya Ruby Frazier’s series of social documentary photographs that began in 2016 and which evidence the contaminated lead water crisis in Flint, Michigan. *Seeing the Wood from the Trees* at Kunsthaus Hamburg features three film-based visual essays by the Italian research-based design studio Formafantasma (Andrea Trimarchi, Simone Farresin) that investigate the impact of the global timber industry on forests. Fascinating and thought-provoking is their immersive video projection *Quercus* (2020) that maps an oak forest in Virginia using lidar (short for “light detection and ranging”) 3D laser scanning hardware. This haunting footage is combined with a voice-over by the philos-



B. Ingrid Olson, *Perfect Spectator*, perforation, 2021–22. Plexiglass, dye-sublimation print on aluminum, MDF, silicone, poplar, screws, 76.2 × 114.3 × 30.5 cm. Courtesy: i8 Gallery, Reykjavík. Copyright: the artist. Photo: Robert Chase Heishman.

correlation between the artist’s “body, the bodies of the beholders, and the architectonic body.” It is a complex relationship that B. Ingrid Olson delicately probes.

The artist constructs the pictorial spaces of her multidimensional photographs not virtually but in the actual physical space of her studio — or, as was the case with *Elastic X*, at the residency space of Surf Point Foundation in York on the coast of Maine, where she produced most of the exhibited works. The point of departure of her work is her own androgynous female body: she sets herself in relation to her studio space, using found materials (such as a decanter, a trash bin, or little white rubber objects that cannot be deciphered and hover between balloons or condoms), and photographs her body in a fragmented manner. Obviously, the photographs subvert notions of a self-portrait through the many layers that are constructed (including transparency and mirroring) and through her chosen angle (pointing downward) when mounting the image; instead, the artist is sharing her first-person perspective very closely. The condensed photographs thus also test normative and gendered materials and experiment with their relations to the beholder.

Already in the first gallery of the exhibition, B. Ingrid Olson brings the body and related spatial questions from the pictorial space into the actual space: the floor plan of this first room in the basement of the Secession has the form of a Greek cross, a square with four equal openings, flowing into niches. B. Ingrid Olson marked the inner square with creamy-white sculptural elements, framing four small anthropomorphic sculptures, again installed at a lower height, made out of materials such as porcelain, rusted steel, lacquer, sand, papier-mâché, latex, or wool. The measurements of those objects resembling bodily anatomy might correspond to human proportions; the beholder is integrated into this meticulously fathomed space.

square, the Polaroid format subtly implying the chosen tool. The mainly black-and-white images present material from the artist’s studio, found objects, small remains from larger works, and little things carefully placed next to or stacked over one another. In long sequences (of up to twenty-five images), B. Ingrid Olson shares her interest in forms and her countless investigations tying them to the photograph; the visual information allows an interplay between objects, ground, and light to unfold. The long shadows and the warm light suggest that the pictures were taken in the evening. “Maybe I want to cast only a passing shadow. Feel like my mother’s ‘Thank God’ when she took off her corset,” says Rosmarie Waldrop in her poem “Doing” on the first page of this book.

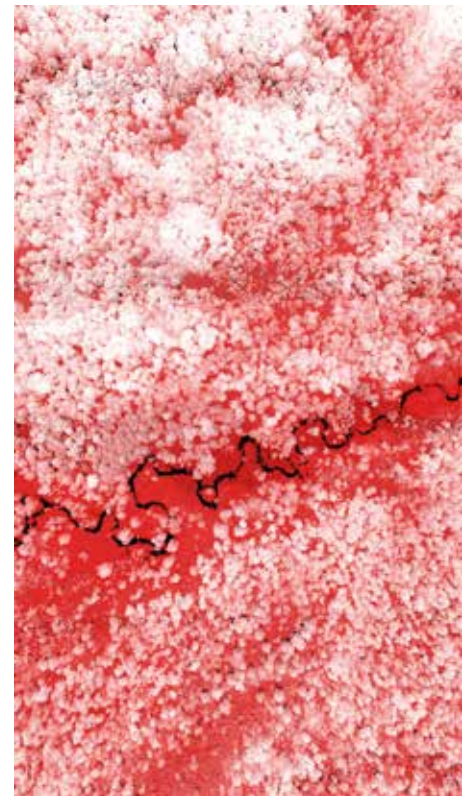
Margit Neuhold has been an editor of *Camera Austria International* since 2011.

8th Triennial of Photography Hamburg: Currency

Various venues, Hamburg, 20. 5. – 18. 9. 2022

by Paul Willemsen

The Triennial of Photography Hamburg has taken place since 1999 in collaboration with the city’s major museums and exhibition venues. The 8th edition has opted for the notion of “currency” as a broad concept with room for many perspectives. Koyo Kouoh, the director and chief curator of Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) in Cape Town, is serving as artistic director, working alongside the curators of partner institutions in the city. The curatorial concept relates the economic term of currency to cultural capital. In our late-capitalist era, characterized by the saturation of digital media and algorithm-driven data flows, images (beware: not to be confused with the profusion of visual mass that is circulating daily) have become currency.



Formafantasma, *Quercus*, 2020. Video, 9:16 ratio (color, sound), 12’08”. Courtesy: the artists.

opher and botanist Emanuele Coccia that takes on the perspective of the forest to illustrate the ways we as humans depend on trees.

Three worthwhile monographic exhibitions focus on deceased photographers who had close ties with Hamburg. Hans Meyer-Veden (1931–2018), whose work is on display at Jenisch Haus,