

## Forbidden Love Art in the Wake of Television Camp

The significant discussions during the seventies and eighties around television are forgotten – since then, television has asserted itself as a medium which is appealing to the masses and is hardly called into question by media- and technology critical artistic projects. How do artists who rather receive television casually and from a consumer-oriented point of view, and are interested in its (pop)cultural image production and it as space of politics, experience this powerful “old lady” nowadays?

*Forbidden Love: Art in the Wake of Television Camp* analyses television as a reactive and open process, as a space of the struggling for attention, of self-expression and affect, which popularises the discourse around identity, gender and difference. Thereof evolving “images” of television determine, as powerful construction, the thematic framing of the exhibition, which flirts with the participation of a mediatized production process, trying to draw us out of our habitual role as a passive audience. The works on display start out with television as an apparatus of image production, sounding capabilities of a symbolical transfer of common genre-immanent codes and meanings to the point of a separate metaphorical interpretation. The projects analyze the established and mostly already a bit outdated image productions of television and also discuss forms of a “camp” aesthetics around a possible “different” television.

The exhibition title “Forbidden Love” refers to a pre-prime-time serial, which is running since 2004 on weekdays, triggering individual imitations in Turkey and Bulgaria and, on the other hand, to the Canadian docufiction *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (1992). In the foreground of both broadcasts are melodramatic relations and intrigues of changing hetero- and homosexual couples, whose rather naive progressive potentials are part of the consumer-friendly early evening program.

At the same time, Kölischer Kunstverein shows a homonymous exhibition, curated by Anja Nathan-Dorn and Kathrin Jentjens: “The exhibition studies television’s modes of temptation with its ‘glaring mannerisms’

and television as world of experience with various formats and communication forms and the therein comprised ambiguities. The project does not aim at a contentual or moral analyses of television but is interested in an aesthetical, in a ‘camp’ approach to this field as Susan Sontag wrote.”

The exhibition in Graz concentrates, in this context, on the artistic access to related television formats like soap operas and docufiction and its tendency towards staging, idealization and shift in meaning, and the variable interest and indifference towards a television that is revolving always anew on its fringes, however, only as sufficiently interesting mass media.

A common catalogue and a symposium in cooperation with Cologne Conference accompany the whole project.

### Kölischer Kunstverein

Sept 25 – Dec 19, 2010

with Judith Barry, Joseph Beuys, Chris Burden, Mel Chin and the GALA Committee, Jaime Davidovich, Simon Denny, Kalup Linzy, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Ryan Trecartin, Francesco Vezzoli, Andy Warhol

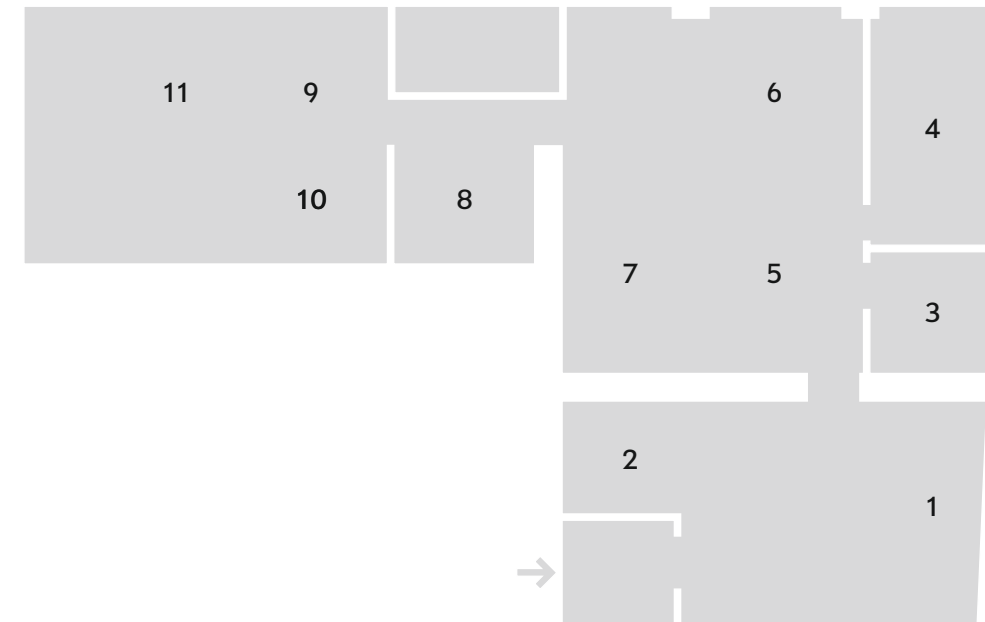
### Symposium

Sept 29, 2010, Cologne Conference

with mit David Joselit, Kalup Linzy, Matthias Michalka, David Simon and others



# Forbidden Love Art in the Wake of Television Camp



### Works

- 1 Christoph Draeger/Reynold Reynolds
- 2 Marko Lulić
- 3 Judith Hopf/Stephan Geene
- 4 Omer Fast
- 5 Heimo Zobernig
- 6 Susanne Schuda
- 7 Zuzanna Janin
- 8 BitteBitteJaJa (Ulu Braun/Roland Rauschmeier)
- 9 Sanja Iveković
- 10 Marlene Haring
- 11 Frédéric Moser/Philippe Schwinger

**Period** Sept 26 – Nov 27, 2010, Tue–Sat 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.,  
Wed – Fri 3 – 6 p.m., steirischer herbst Sat, Sun 3 – 6 p.m.

**Curator** Sandro Droschl

**Coproduction** steirischer herbst, Kölischer Kunstverein

# Forbidden Love Art in the Wake of Television Camp

## 1 Christoph Draeger/ Reynold Reynolds

\*1965 in Zurich, lives in New York  
\*1966 in Central Alaska, lives in Berlin

**Apocalypso Place**, 2000/2010, Video, 13', 6 TV sets, hi-fi system, couch, various objects

In a revised version of their installation *Apokalypso Place* which was conceived for the turn of the millennium, Christoph Draeger and Reynold Reynolds furnish a living room of a sitcom-production, which has been heavily damaged by a natural disaster. A television-addicted, hyped-up family who feast on the "breaking news" which are broadcasted on television is now becoming the victim of a catastrophe and thus relevant for newscasts. Draeger and Reynolds analyse the attention craving mechanisms of our medial culture and its often readily overexcited characters. In a chaotic collage of sitcom genre-typical hyped conversation conventions, elements of news reports and advertisement, Draeger and Reynolds satirize the wide-spread interest in (bad) news. This effect is amplified by the grotesque exaggeration of a middle-class family situation and its stage prop-like suggested, now mixed up life- and living style.

## 2 Marko Lulić

\*1972 in Vienna, lives in Vienna  
**Space Girl Dance 2009**, 2009, video, 3'  
**Zentralkomitee**, 2004, video, 1'

Marko Lulić is interested in modernist monuments and public sculptures and its current reception and shifts in meaning. Lulić analyses the impacts and forms of a deliberate heroic utopian history and, at the same time, does not stop short of a direct, "applied" usage of his objects of investigation: He exercised, for example, on a sculpture of Vojin Bakić in Belgrade. The Video *Space Girl Dance 2009* is inspired by a clip of a TV-musical show by Raquel Welch, which the American film- and later aerobic star shot on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Mexico City in 1968. Bakić reshot this scene in the sculpture

garden of the Erich Hauser Stiftung in Baden-Württemberg. The TV-video *Zentralkomitee* shows one of the, in terms of architecture, less outstanding modernist sky scrapers of Belgrade, of which the glass facade went to pieces through a NATO air raid and which was – opposite to the museum of contemporary art – meanwhile rebuilt into a shopping centre.

## 3 Judith Hopf/ Stephan Geene

Judith Hopf, \*1969 in Karlsruhe, lives in Berlin, Stephan Geene, \*1961 in Attendorn, lives in Berlin  
**Bei mir zu dir (tv – low dunkel)**, 2002, video, 17'47"

In *Bei mir zu Dir (tv – low dunkel)* Judith Hopf and Stephan Geene describe the mass media's at times desperate, at times grotesque, comical search of sensation, which are capable to tie the attention of the audience to the medium. The history of a television show staging a dead person is shown. In a live talk, his otherworldly perspective on life shall give the audience so far impossible insights. However, the endeavor fails, the communication of the presenter and the dead person founders on the different terms of thinking. Epistemically, the dialogue partners are light years apart. The language of life is stuck inextinguishably to rational and economic constraints. The perspective of the otherworldly cannot interpret this language anymore, since the contradictions of the alienated, earthly existence in the other world have ended in smoke.  
– Matthias Mühling

## 4 Omer Fast

\* 1972 in Jerusalem, lives in Berlin  
**CNN Concatenated**, 2002, video, NTSC 4:3, 18', loop

In his videos, films and installations, Omer Fast is concerned with questions of identity, historicity and memory which he develops by means of subjective narrations to staged blueprints and translations into image media. He analyses, in this context the mechanisms of the mass media like television, whose news

reports can generate a framing to choose relevant events that are interesting for the audience and the prevailing medial and political regime and to devote broad attention to it. The video *CNN Concatenated* consists of hundred of words and short half sentences, which were spoken by numerous commentators of the American television channel *The Cable News Network*. Fast detaches the spoken from the context and assigns a new history to it by recording a suggestive dialogue between audience and station: "How did we get to this point? Where did we go wrong? What have we done?"

## 5 Heimo Zobernig

**Nr. 12**, 1996, video, colour, silent, 30', loop  
**Nr. 6/13**, 1996, video, colour, silent, 30', loop  
**Nr. 20**, 2002, video, colour, sound, 20', loop  
**Nr. 21**, 2003, video, colour, sound, 10', loop  
4 tables, light gray, 80×80 cm

Heimo Zobernig shows four works that play with the genre of television with the interaction of an analytical and humorous approach, which is characteristic for the artist. For Video *Nr. 12*, Zobernig uses the technique of chroma keying which makes possible the replacement of video material by filtering the chromaticity. By applying ultramarine to the access of Renaissance Society, Zobernig creates a blue box which he feeds with a city tour through Chicago, corresponding to part of a following shot from the movie "Blues Brothers". The video *Nr. 6/13* is a revision of an older work showing a close-up shot of Zobernig's face when looking into the camera for thirty minutes. The latter was filmed and skewed breadth-wise in full-screen mode. A ride on a roller coaster is shown on the video *Nr. 20* whose chromaticity is of maximal colour saturation and where certain tones of blue are replaced by blue box blue. A text following perceptual psychology superimposes the colour intense swoosh. The Video *Nr. 21* modifies variations of eight colour bars of the RGB colour model and its accompanying sine oscillation

of the chamber pitch A, which is used for the calibration of monitors.

## 6 Susanne Schuda

\*1970 in Vienna, lives in Vienna  
**Die Schudas, der Fortschritt**, 2005/06, video, 19'  
**The Bir(d)th, die schudas reloaded**, 2007/08, video, 22'34", photo wallpaper, 250×290 cm, monitor, projection

In her video version of the two-part Internet telenovela "Die Schudas", Susanne Schuda plays with the genre of the telenovela. By means of a family history, she develops concise characters like the progressive Henry or the suicidal Betty. Here, quite ordinary madness in a (pointed) family life of quarrel, repression and solitude, leads to emotional dialogues: Schuda develops the disparity and narrational tension therein in line with a fragmented and humorously exaggerated image- and text body. The artist uses a digital collage of 3D animation and spoken text, of which the complex concept and rhetoric account for her quality as precise author of socio-critical constellations. Despite the merely graspable overflow of impressions, a consistent image of the private evolves, which, in its aesthetical and neutral analytical complexity, astonishingly well communicates with the public as space of politics.

## 7 Zuzanna Janin

\*1964 in Warsaw, lives in Warsaw  
**Majka from the Movie (Szaleństwo Majki Skowron)**, 2009, 6 episodes, Master Mini CAM, Courtesy: lokal\_30, Warsaw  
**The WAY**, 2009, video, 15'54", loop  
**70's**, 2009, video, 13'16", loop  
**BEFORE or AFTER**, 2009, video, 13'16", loop  
**HERE or THERE**, 2009, video, 22'53", loop  
**FUN FUN FUN**, 2009, video, 30'38", loop  
**SKELTER-SHELTER**, 2009, trailer, video, 15'42", loop (with Tomas Kozak)

In the installation *Majka from the Movie (Szaleństwo Majki Skowron)* Madness of *Majka*

*Skowron*), Zuzanna Janin shows six episodes of the homonymous Polish television series from the 1970s, which she completes and superimposes with found footage and self-shot current material. In the original version, the artist was the eponymous TV star, now her daughter plays the principal character. The successful serial deals of Majka's youth, desires and dreams, which remained restricted due to the former political regime, seeming boundless and strangely exchangeable in the new global version. Similar to an image-journey, Majka begins to search for her identity, whereas she also encounters famous personalities like the philosopher Slavoj Žižek or the musicians Iggy Pop and Tom Waits. Majka's experiences and projections overlap with images of television which attend the life of teenagers then and now.

## 8 BitteBitteJaja

Ulu Braun, \*1976 in Schongau, lives in Berlin, Roland Rauschmeier, \*1974 in Augsburg, lives in Vienna  
**Daphne**, 2010, video, HD (9:16), 2'32", loop

In their *Cadavre Exquise Vivants*, BitteBitteJaja (Ulu Braun / Roland Rauschmeier) arrange abnormal body-collages, which are composed of limbs and elements that are extracted from various television- and film productions. Their "excellent coffin dodgers" remind of visions of horror- and science fiction-B-movies, whose burlesque protagonists often are of astonishingly indifferent gender and origin regarding their preferably sexual gestures. The present work *Daphne* consists merely of television images and refers to the myth of this ancient nymph. Reacting on Eros' allegedly lacking accuracy, Apollo was hit by an arrow making him fall in love with Daphne. She turns into a tree to elude Apollo's courtship, who refused to let up on her. In an astonishingly precise outline, BitteBitteJaja interpret Daphne's tragic fate by updating with powerful images this classical allegory around an eternally forbidden love.

## 9 Sanja Iveković

\*1949 in Zagreb, lebt in Zagreb  
**Opca opasnost – soap (Generalalarm - Seifenoper)**, 1995, video, colour, sound, 5', Courtesy: Generali Foundation, Vienna

Her photo montages, videos, performances, and installations, emerging since the mid-1970s, have been marked by a critical questioning of the mass media and their identity-forging potential. By personally entering into public discourse – be it in the shape of photographic representations in the media or as the actual protagonist of performances – Iveković brings out into the open the collective social codes of behavior based on gender-specific standardized patterns in the mass media. While Iveković's early videos and performances reflect representations of womanhood within a traditionally patriarchal order, since the 1980s her works have increasingly placed the accent on issues of democracy and politics. The video *Opca opasnost – soap* consists of footage broadcasted on Croatian public television at the moments when the last missiles were launched on Zagreb. The video records a Spanish soap opera with Croatian subtitles and the continual insert OPCA OPASNOST ZAGREB (General alert Zagreb). – Sanja Iveković / Luisa Ziaja

## 10 Marlene Haring

\*1978 in Vienna, in Vienna  
**What Matters is What You See. For B. J.**, 2005, video, without sound, 1'40"

In her performances, interventions and installations, Marlene Haring reflects and intervenes on the site-specific regulations and conventions which govern relationships and behaviours. *What Matters is What You See (For B. J.)* is a video Haring made for an exhibition occasioned by the Birgit Jürgenssen Award, which Haring received in 2005. The award commemorates an artist who died young. In her career, Jürgenssen worked through the female body and its metamorphoses, in drawing, painting and

photography, with a feminist, and often painfully humorous, attitude. Like Jürgenssen, Haring takes a feminist approach. By critical contestation of her own body as social body, Haring brings her work beyond individual subjectivity and institutional critique, claiming the social agency of the gendered body. The video shows a close-up self-portrait of Haring, her face continuously switching between laughing and crying. She looks out of the frame towards something which we don't see.

## 11 Frédéric Moser/ Philippe Schwinger

Frédéric Moser, \*1966 in Saint-Imier, lives in Berlin and Geneva  
Philippe Schwinger, \*1961 in Saint-Imier, lives in Berlin und Geneva  
**Unexpected Rules, the Puppet Version**, 2004–2006, Puppetry constructed in wood, with wooden bulbs, projection screen, 168×177×95 cm, 35mm film on HD, 16'

The script of Frédéric Moser's and Philippe Schwinger's work *Unexpected Rules* is based on the "Clinton-Lewinsky Affair", which arose from the nexus between power, sex, and globalized media and shows how multifaceted levels of interest, along with public images, ultimately render the "true" interpretation of an event impossible. The artist's version of the affair does not follow a linear storyline that is shaped by causality and rational behavior. Rather, their cinematographic and scenic adaptation of the actors' contradictory emotions, interests, and strategies creates a complex plot that forces the viewer to accept paradoxes as a part of reality. These different layers are integrated into a popular form of representation – a cross between a TV show and puppet theater. In their artist statement Moser & Schwinger mention about the performative situation of *Unexpected Rules*: "We conceived the lightbox as a place where politics stages its own performance. The fact that all protagonists are constantly on stage makes each character even more lucid. By distorting the facts in a plausible manner, we are

attempting to set the characters' spoken lines within contexts that, in the real world, exclude one another."