

# **PORTFOLIO**

**– selected works –**

**Johanna Maj Schmidt**

## SHORT STATEMENT/BIO

Johanna Maj Schmidt (\*1992) is a media artist and PhD researcher of far-right internet meme culture from Leipzig.

Working at the intersection of film, performance, and analogue forms of image-making like drawing and painting, as well as text, she is interested in traversing epistemological boundaries, that is to say different modes of knowing and seeing. Both in her academic and artistic work, she explores how the online sphere is shaping our social co-existence, and vice versa, and the inner contradictions at the heart of any individual or collective identity.

Before pursuing her PhD as part of the post graduate programme „Rightwing Populism – Authoritarian Developments, Far-Right Discourses, Democratic Responses“, Johanna obtained a degree in media art in the Expanded Cinema class of Clemens von Wedemeyer from the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig (First), as well as an MA in Art and Politics (Distinction) from Goldsmiths University of London.

## WE MUST BE MISTAKEN, 2022



installation view, Galerie KUB, 2022  
image: Ludwig Ander-Donath

*4-channel installation, loop, 49:17:14*

We Must Be Mistaken is a performative 4-channel video installation about echo chambers in online spheres. The audience is moving between two filter bubbles indicated by a separating wall/projection surface. The work revolves around growing rifts between different patterns of desire.

While some yearn for equality and make their anger about gendered power structures heard, others share cynical memes in defense of “free speech” and their idea of masculinity. A conflict develops across the boundaries of both echo chambers, without the characters encountering each other directly.

The audience moves back and forth between the two filter bubbles, gaining intimate insights into the respective emotional worlds and atmospheres that are condensed to the point of absurdity. The viewers have to constantly position themselves anew in relation to the conflicting narratives, and decide which sphere they want to pay attention to. While getting a glimpse into both echo chambers they cannot perceive everything that is happening inside them.

In We Must Be Mistaken, I bring different performative works I did in the past as well as my current research on far-right “meme warriors” (see p. 6) into a constellation with texts by writer friends whom I invited to perform their pieces as part of the video. The performers were conceptually cast and bring their own entanglement with the subject matter into the process of developing the, partly exaggerated, characters. The role of a feminist scholar is e.g. embodied by US-American linguist Dr. Catherine Tebaldi, who studies “Tradwives”, i.e. far-right female vloggers. While she initially appears as an expert, she shows herself more vulnerable later, delivering a personal monologue about her unfulfilled longing for intimacy.

I realised the work in collaboration with Charlotte Ruppert, with whom I have been writing and directing, with Jan-Luca Ott, with whom I did the production and installation, and many other artist friends and acquaintances from Leipzig, NYC & London.

[LINK TRAILER](#)

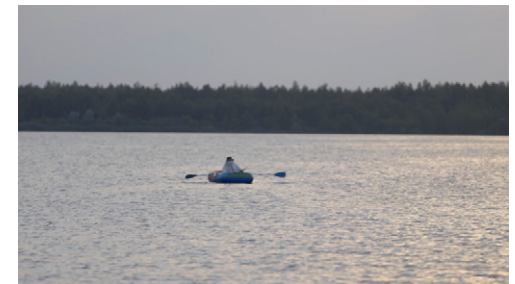
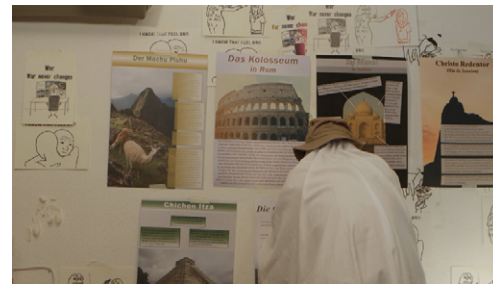
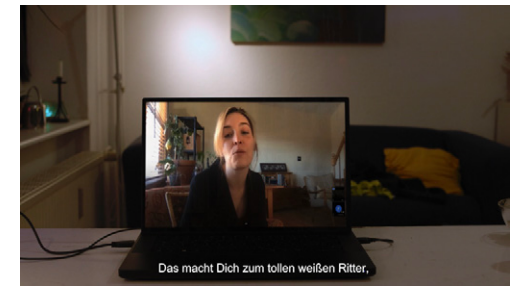
(no password, 03:12)

[LINK 1-CHANNEL SCREENER](#)

(password: WMBM\_JMS\_2022)



installation views, Galerie KUB, 2022  
images: Ludwig Ander-Donath



video stills, We Must Be Mistaken, 2022

# REPRESENTATIONS OF HEROISM IN FAR-RIGHT MEME CULTURE, 2018-ongoing research project (PhD)

While the traditional far right is associated with an actively practiced heroic and martyr worship, the relationship of new rightwing movements to the Heroic remains undertheorized. In my dissertation, I seek to fill this void arguing that far-right online meme culture is marked by an *ambivalent* relationship to heroism, which stands in contrast to the dead serious, unambiguous take on heroism and masculinity in “traditional” Nazi and neo-Nazi propaganda: In the context of the „(First) Great Meme War“, which was a meme-based propaganda campaign in support of, and encouraged by, presidential candidate Donald Trump in 2016, a (partly) *self-ironic* approach to the desire for heroism/soldierly masculinity can be observed. I argue that this self-ironic stance might serve the purpose of *immunising* heroic fantasies in view of a feared „loss“/absence of what is commonly understood as the Heroic in the online sphere, which is commonly associated with physical sacrifice.

In my analysis, I focus on heroic representations of new types of self-proclaimed “meme warriors” that are

emerging on image boards such as Reddit, 4chan, and 8kun. I am particularly interested in the internal contradictions of such heroic imagery that uses references to *historical* physical combat in order to honour contemporary *online* “warriors”. In order to define the online-savvy far right’s changing approach to heroism, I conduct a visual analysis of far-right memes that were circulated during the Great Meme War, by combining Roswitha Breckner’s visual segment analysis with Alfred Lorenzer’s psychoanalytic depth-hermeneutics.

Working Paper available for download: „Saving Heroism in the Online Sphere – The Heroic in Far-Right Internet Memes“, In: Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies Working Paper Series, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3zd6f7q9#main>.

Analysis of far-right memetic reactions to the Russian war on Ukraine, published as part of the 2022 Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365426664>



two memetic self-portraits of so-called „meme warriors“

**EINE EINSTELLUNG ZUM REICHTUM  
RICHNESS IN A SINGLE SHOT, 2021-ongoing**



installation view, Villa Esche, Chemnitz, 2021  
image: Alexander Meyer

*participatory video collection, ongoing project*

A monitor is positioned upright between pieces of antique furniture in the museum Villa Esche, which used to be home to textile factory owner Herbert Eugen Esche, 1874–1962. It shows smartphone recordings from the interiors of other houses. The artist has invited people from all over the world, to collect videos from houses and apartments, which, in their view, best represent “prosperity”. The recordings follow two rules: they should be shot in a single take and filmed with the participants’ smartphones. The footage is presented without any sound. To date, the growing collection included silent views into private homes from Berlin, Bogota, Bologna, Le Mans, London, and Vilnius.

The work references Antje Ehrmann’s and Harun Farocki’s “Eine Einstellung zur Arbeit/Labour in a Single Shot”, who initiated workshops encouraging the participants to shoot short films that investigate the subject of labour. *Eine Einstellung zum Reichtum* shifts the gaze towards yet another sphere that remains mostly invisible: wealth is, as it seems, imbued with a sense of taboo.



stills, video collection, *Eine Einstellung zum Reichtum*, 2021



## BOY WITH HANG, 2021



solo performance, Villa Esche, Chemnitz, 2021

*solo performance*

A young man in a ghillie suit, a camouflage suit used by the military, is moving across Villa Esche and the surrounding garden. Equipped with a folding stool, he is settling in different places within the exhibition, where the strategy of camouflage works to varying degrees. While seated, he is playing the hang, a UFO-shaped percussion instrument, which was invented in 2000 that emanates soothing sounds.

I realised this work together with Charlotte Ruppert, and Andre Schmidt, who performed as Boy with Hang.



solo performance, Villa Esche, Chemnitz, 2021

# MY HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON YOU, 2021



video still, Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin, 2021

*performance video, 03:00*

As a doubled figure inspired by Dolly Parton, the two performers are sitting on an inbuilt flatscreen that shows a streaming video of a multiplayer on-line shooter game by Dr. Disrespect (who is known for his self-ironic performance of gaming masculinity). Dressed in wedding gowns with wavy-blond long-haired wigs, eccentric makeup, and grotesquely big fake boobs (female monstrosity), the performers are holding begging bowls, which are usually used for the collection in churches. Once in a while, they are shouting “My happiness depends on you!” (from Dolly Parton’s song “Jolene”) hauntingly in chorus, staring at the audience intensely/fury-like/expectantly.

If the Heroic traditionally claims a singularity by the self-sacrifice of one individual, strong (man) for the sake

of an ideology, a (feminist) response to the emphasis on the outstanding hero would be a reversion to interdependence. Against this backdrop, the sentence “My happiness depends on you” could be seen, positively, as an anti-heroic preaching or, negatively, as voluntary submission, hinting at the ambivalent relationship between dependency and independency.

The performance video “My Happiness Depends On You” was part of Rencontres Internationales Paris-Berlin 2021. I realised the work in collaboration with Charlotte Ruppert, with whom I performed as well.

[LINK PERFORMANCE VIDEO](#)  
(password: Happinesssss)



video stills, Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin, 2021

# I WAS THE REASON YOU ARE IN THE WORLD, 2020



performance, Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig, 2020  
image: Kilian Schellbach

## *Performance*

Dressed in comfortable everyday clothes and with huge light pink udders on their bellies, two performers sing an adaptation of Kate Nash's song "Nicest Thing". They perform it amidst drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

The lyrical self of the text literally finds her voice regarding her romantic fantasies. Driven by the desire to be her beloved one's only love object for ever, in this interpretation, she blusters herself into a more and more narcissistic-authoritarian attitude.

I both developed and performed this piece together with Charlotte Ruppert. We performed it at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, at an exhibition in an allotment club, and at a feminist gala at the alternative concert venue Conne Island, Leipzig.



performance, Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig, 2020  
images: Kilian Schellbach

# WE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WE MEANT WHEN WE SAID WE, 2021

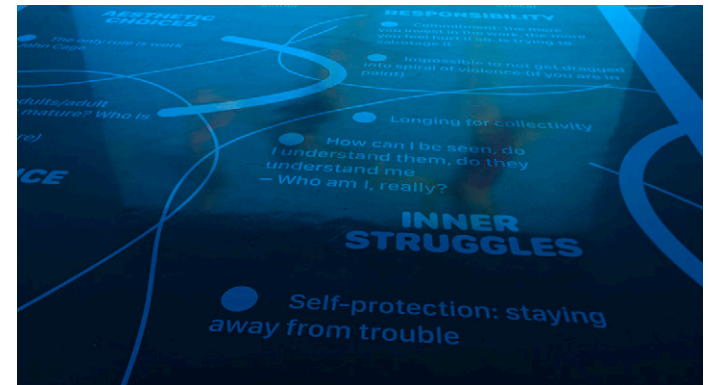


installation view, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 2021  
image: Stefania Smolkina

two single channel video installation,  
vinyl plotting & one stereo sound work

Set in a high-diving swimming pool, a socialist modernist building, a group of artists are following the instructions of an Aqua-Aerobics coach. They had given her the task to form the group into a collective, by means of exercises in the water. The camera captures the individual reactions to the instructions above the surface of the water and the struggle underneath. In a state of voluntary floating, the responsibility of coming together as a collective is outsourced – a coach that we never get to see or, to the water itself? The video is accompanied by a reflection on (imposed) collectivity.

We Did Not Know What We Meant When We Said We is a collaborative project by Louis Hay, Franziska Koppmann, Jan-Luca Ott, Jonas Roßmeißl, Yara Saleh, Johanna Maj Schmidt, Stefania Smolkina, Su Yu Hsin, Max Wigger. It was part of the exhibition “Conditions of a Necessity” at Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 2021.



video stills & installation views, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 2021  
images 5 & 6: Stefania Smolkina



## STARDUST WALK OUT, 2020



public/social sculpture, Baden-Baden, 2020

### *Public/social sculpture*

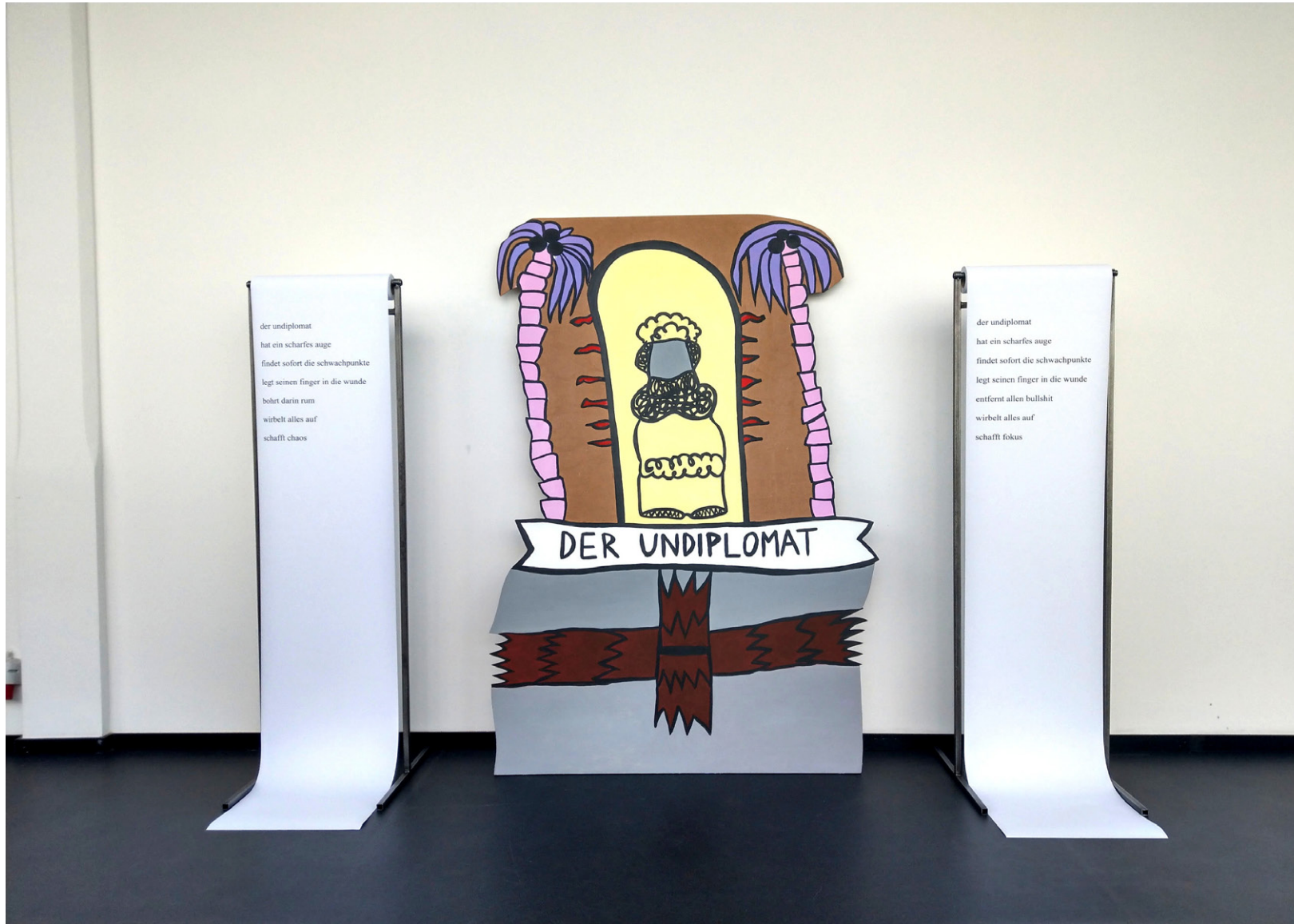
A square-shaped public/social sculpture made of slippers from 4- and 5-star hotels of Baden-Baden. Passers-by are invited to choose a pair of slippers from the white square and walk around wearing them in public space.

The work negotiates questions regarding the relationship between private and public life in a place that has been known (for centuries) as a resort town for rather wealthy tourists.

Stardust Walk Out was a collaboration between Jan-Luca Ott, Johanna Maj Schmidt, and Stefania Smolkina as part of "Conditions of a Necessity - The Gathering", which took place at Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden.



# DER UNDIPLOMAT, 2019



installation view, LOFFT, Leipzig, 2019

*acrylics on wood, digital print on paper, steel*

“Der Undiplomat” (the “undiplomat”) leans against the wall, showing a hybrid, messianic/threatening creature (something in-between queen and sheep) in an archway, surrounded by an “exotic”/vulnerable environment and a proto-state emblem. Next to the painting, there are two rolls of paper with digitally printed texts describing two different types of undiplomats: both types always immediately find the weak spots, both types of undiplomats put their finger in the wound, but while one of them twists it and thereby creates more chaos, the other one creates focus by putting her finger in the wound. In its former configuration, the undiplomat can be seen as a prototype characteristic of a vulgarizing and derailing time (perhaps a Trump kind of figure). In her latter version the undiplomat is also a heroic-uncompromising role model: she confronts herself with weak spots, removes superfluous bullshit, targeting problems directly.

This installation was exhibited at the Performance Philosophy Festival „Am Nerv der Demokratie“ at LOFFT, Leipzig, in 2019.

der undiplomat

hat ein scharfes auge

findet sofort die schwachpunkte

legt seinen finger in die wunde

bohrt darin rum

wirbelt alles auf

schafft chaos

der undiplomat

hat ein scharfes auge

findet sofort die schwachpunkte

legt seinen finger in die wunde

entfernt allen bullshit

wirbelt alles auf

schafft fokus

# THE NEW VERTICAL, 2018

First published in PaperWork (3), London.

## The New Vertical

'What the Anus has got to do with the Trousers' is a Brazilian saying. People commonly use it when one thing has got nothing to do with another thing:

1. Anus
2. Trousers

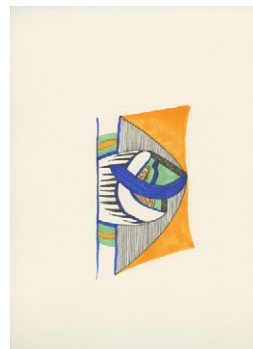
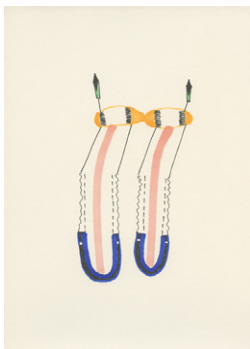
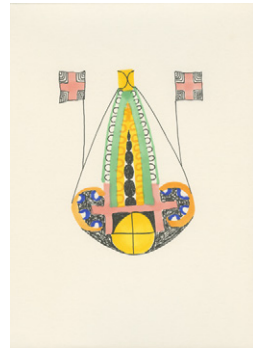
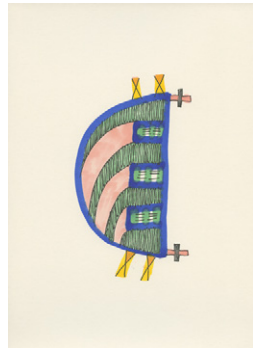
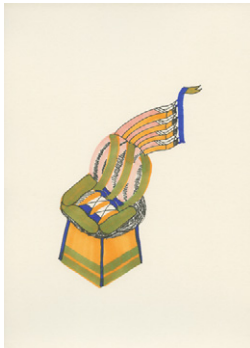
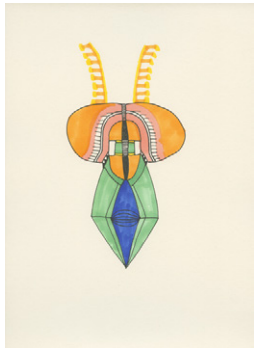
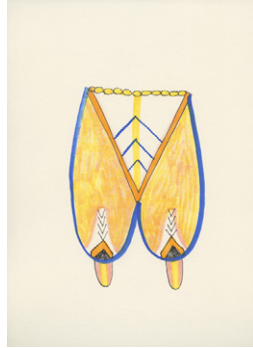
'What the Anus Has Got to Do with the Trousers' was also the title of a collectively planned exhibition. Yet, some of the artists involved in the exhibition wanted to withdraw their works because they regarded the title as unpoetic. Some of them said they immediately had to think of shit in the in-between:

1. Anus
2. Shit
3. Trousers

If poetry is something that leaves you behind with wondrous encodings, the saying surely does not count as poetry; yet, if the poetic is understood as something that concerns the relations between things, as something that unfolds between things, the clash of anus and trousers can be categorized as poetic, not least because there will always remain an in-between, in which spaces of thought might open up:

1. Anus
2. Space of Thought
3. Trousers

# UNTITLED (selection), 2018



Untitled, Marker on Paper, 21x27.9, 2018



Untitled, Marker on Paper, 21x27.9, 2018

*Drawing series, marker on paper*

My drawings position themselves in the undefined spaces in-between objects and thoughts, in between the two- and three dimensional. Just before the object might crystallize, becoming a symbol for something specific, I direct it towards other possible associations. My play with a constantly

shifting gaze might be seen as a kind of utopian exercise, opening a space for things to be seen/imagined differently, out of which new formations can evolve. My drawings also serve as a sort of score for my time-based works.

## CRYSTAL PALACE GROUP, 2015



video still, performance video/performance, Crystal Palace Park, London, 2015



*performance & performance video, 04:07*

Four “promoters”, dressed in Victorian costumes (referencing the “original spirit” of Crystal Palace) and with a brassard bearing the original design of the Chinese communist flag, are travelling to Crystal Palace Park via Overground. After reaching Crystal Palace Park, the performers set up their corporate-style promotional site with a roll-up banner and start distributing flyers that are announcing a new development project at Crystal Palace Park. When asked about their costumes they refer to their role as promoters for the Crystal Palace Group, without disclosing any further information about the project or the rationale behind their outfits. Members of the public are redirected to a website advertised on the flyer, which is permanently “Under Construction”. Throughout the performance, a looped soundtrack, appropriating a promotional video by the Argentinian real estate company

Faena, fills the public space with a seductive narration about how “ideas are the most powerful tools we have to change the world”. The performance connects the Victorian imperialist project with the surreality of the present spirit of capitalism, which is capable of incorporating conflicting ideologies (as in the case of China capitalism + communism). The superficial engagement of the promoters with the project they advertise smoothes over any attempt at questioning the contradictions inherent in their costumes.

Crystal Palace Group was a performance that took place in 2015 between New Cross and Crystal Palace Park, London as a collaboration between Athanasios Anagnostopoulos, Jacquie Rosenbach, Michelle Salomons, Johanna Maj Schmidt, and Florence Stencel-Wade.

[LINK PERFORMANCE VIDEO](#)  
(no password)



video stills, performance video, Crystal Palace Group, 2015

## OSTERSPAZIERGANG VON JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, 2018



performance, NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst) Folk Art Biennale, Trbovlje, Slovenia, 2018

## Performance

Five performers stand in a circle/pentagram throwing a neon-green raw egg in clockwise direction from person to person. Whenever an egg breaks, without delay, an AI generated voice recites the final line of Goethe's Osterspaziergang, Faust I: „Hier bin ich Mensch, hier darf ich's sein!“ (transl.: „Here I am human, here dare it to be!“). Thereafter, a Faux Queen

(female/diva queen) that is standing in the middle of the circle/pentagram on a plinth and who is dressed in a traditional German Dirndl and carrying a basket full of green eggs, throws a new egg to the person who dropped the previous one. The performance finishes when all eggs from the basket are broken.

„Hier bin ich Mensch, hier darf ich's sein!“

„Here I am human, here dare it to be!“



performance & post-performance impressions, NSK Folk Art Biennale, Trbovlje, 2018

## GREY IN GREY, 2017

First published in Archipelago Magazine (4), "Melancholia", London.

Republished in Freie Assoziation – Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Sozialpsychologie, "Utopie", Gießen.

When my grandfather taught me how to swim he stood next to me and held my abdomen so I could move my arms and legs on the surface of the water mass without feeling the gravitation. Before I was able to swim, I had dreamt how my body was swimming. My arms and legs found a common rhythm and started to move forward calmly in transparent water.

As I was able to swim without my grandfather's support I spent many summer afternoons with a friend in the centre of the lake, trying to dive as long and as deep as possible. The deeper we got down the darker and colder turned the water and the more we felt the pressure on our ears and eyes. Whenever we got back to the surface we recharged our lungs floating on a voluminous inflatable mattress that started to smell plasticky in the heat of the glaring sun. We rested on the flat surface until we could not bear the light anymore. Then we went back down. Only when the sun was about to set we started to paddle back to the shore. Taking the first steps on firm ground made my head swim. Before leaving the shore, we deflated the air that had filled our giant mattress into the evening breeze.

*When philosophy paints its grey in grey, one form of life has become old, and by means of grey it cannot be rejuvenated, but only known. The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering.*

I recently went to an exhibition, which encircled the issue of boundaries. Most of the pieces showed liquidity, waves or the sea. The exhibits conveyed a vertiginous feeling. Maybe it was a light form of naupathia. But I think that the opposite was the case. What caused my uneasiness was that the idea of water had become solid. – Some weeks later, I learned about Hegel's owl of Minerva, which only starts to move after dusk: "Only one word more concerning the desire to teach the world what it ought to be. For such a purpose philosophy at least always comes too late. Philosophy, as the thought of the world, does not appear until reality has completed its formative process, and made itself ready." – As topical perspectives on water merge and turn into an image that seeks to reflect reality, it can only be known. It paints its grey in grey. Metaphor is always delayed.

Surrounded by what I regarded to be solidified water, I got impatient. As any kind of impatience, my eagerness rested on the idea of a time lag: The image of water was merely expressing something that had already crystallized. I could not see it as anything but a manifestation of an abstract thought related to a given process. Against the backdrop of the global flow of capital and increasing flexibility, mobility, precarity and porosity, the image of the liquid might still be able to reflect an analysis of this time. It is a sad, unnerving image though because it cannot be rejuvenated, but only known.

In order to gain some distance to my impatient perspective on the exhibits, I tried to focus on water for its own sake, asking myself how it would possibly reveal itself as l'eau pour l'eau. It would come into view as an element that existed long before humans could relate to it in mediated ways. Its potential to nurture or dehydrate plants, animals, and humans, carve out stone and let islands or even continents disappear would leave an uncanny feeling.

With a more detached gaze, I returned to the image of water, to its solid shape in the mediated present. It stayed current but could not point beyond mere reflection. Perhaps, I thought, it belonged to the "cold stream" that Ernst Bloch identified as the unmasking of ideologies and the disenchantment of metaphysical illusion. The cold stream comprises the useful analysis of economic conditions and the resistance against ideological deception as implied in Marxist materialism. Yet, according to Bloch, there is a "warm stream" of Marxism as well, which refers to the hope that underlies all liberating intents, the goal towards which all disenchantments are undertaken.

*When philosophy paints its grey in grey, one form of life has become old, and by means of grey it cannot be rejuvenated, but only known. The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering.*

# THE PLURAL TEMPORALITY OF THE NOTION OF “THE PRIMITIVE”, 2016

## *Lecture Performance*

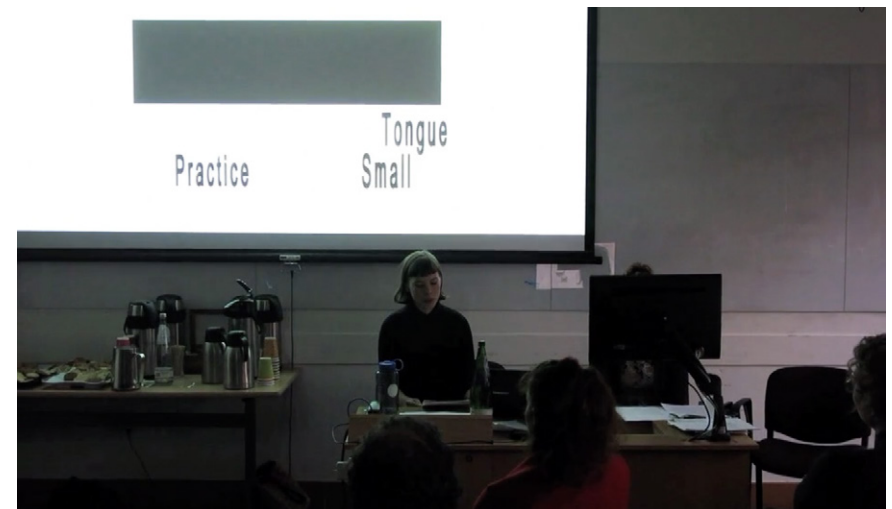
Starting from “Santhal Family”, the first modernist sculpture in India, and the specific relationship to primitivism characteristic of the “Contextual Modernism” at Santiniketan where it emerged, the lecture performance moves on to ask what the notion of the Primitive might mean in the context of globalisation. The outdated notion of “the Primitive” might remind us of the unevenness that only seems to be erased on the surface of the globalised world. Further, it raises the question if the Other of a global self might refer to epistemological alterity (different ways of knowing), rather than to real people(s) – as the notion of “the Primitive” suggested.

The lecture is accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation, which starts off in a formal way, summarizing the text, then moves further and further away from the content, and finally turns into visual metaphors, disrupting the lecture poetically. The Plural Temporality of the Primitive was a lecture performance based on my MA thesis that I realised together

with Katie Pickerell. It was shown at the Fine Art department of Goldsmiths University of London as well as at a Conference on Comparative Political Thought at SOAS, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, in 2016. Presenting the lecture performance both in an art- and an academic context was an attempt at experimenting with diverging forms of knowing within different (disciplinary) fields.



Santhal Family by Ramkinkar Baij  
image: frieze



lecture performance,  
School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2016

## FAKE LANDSCAPES, 2020-present



Fake Landscape #1 & #2,  
acrylics & oil on wood & cardboard, 120 x 85cm & 80 x 60cm, 2020 & 2021

*Painting series, acrylics and oil on wood, cardboard & canvas*

In my painting series Fake Landscapes, I explore atmospheric qualities of fictional spaces. I try to capture atmospheres of places, which only appear in the very process of painting, that lie at the boundary between outer and inner reality. The emerging landscapes result from a speculative tracing of (violent/joyful) actions that might have

occurred in those places. While the far right is spreading fake news that are denying planetary self-destruction, my painting series is reappropriating “fakeness” in order to create fictional, yet emotionally-charged landscapes. In this sense, my Fake Landscapes might be seen as a process of playfully grieving lost planetary futures.



Fake Landscape #3,  
acrylics & oil on canvas, 50 x 40cm, 2021

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# **CATALOGUE**

**- excerpt -**

**Was das Gespenst nicht kennt -  
Specters of the Afternoon**



Was das Gespenst nicht kennt

[Blick nach oben]

Treppen knarzen.

# Was das Gespenst nicht kennt

Specters of the Afternoon

Elena Galeeva, Ayala Shoshana Guy, Lydia Marx,  
Frederike Moormann, Theresa Münnich, Franziska Koppmann,  
Fanni Papp, Kamile Pikelyte, Jonas Roßmeißl,  
Charlotte Ruppert, Johanna Maj Schmidt, Stefania Smolkina,  
Ingmar Stange, Su Yu Hsin, Max Wigger

**KUNST  
SAMMLUNGEN  
CHEMNITZ**

Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz

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Die Klasse expanded cinema  
der Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig  
zu Gast in der Villa Esche

Schritte im oberen Geschoss.

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## Impressum

Diese Publikation erscheint anlässlich der Ausstellung

### **Was das Gespenst nicht kennt – Specters of the Afternoon**

Die Klasse expanded cinema der Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig zu Gast in der Villa Esche

18. Juni 2021 – 29. August 2021  
Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz – Henry van de Velde Museum

Teilnehmende Künstler:innen:  
Elena Galeeva, Ayala Shoshana Guy, Lydia Marx, Frederike Moormann, Franziska Koppmann, Theresa Münnich, Fanni Papp, Kamile Pikelyte, Jonas Roßmeißl, Charlotte Ruppert, Johanna Maj Schmidt, Stefania Smolkina, Ingmar Stange, Su Yu Hsin, Max Wigger

Kuratiert von Clemens von Wedemeyer und Angelika Waniek

Generaldirektor  
Frédéric Bußmann

Referentin des Generaldirektors  
Diana Kopka

Kuratorin des Henry van de Velde Museums  
Antje Neumann-Golle

Restauratorische Betreuung  
Katrin Stephan

Ausstellungstechnik  
Uwe Haase, Andreas Lange, Michael Mehlhorn, Lukas Meier

Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, Marketing  
Carolin Nitsche, Lisa Schliemann-Bukall

Bildung und Vermittlung  
Marie Fröde, Petra Reichmann, Sophie Wolf

Verwaltung  
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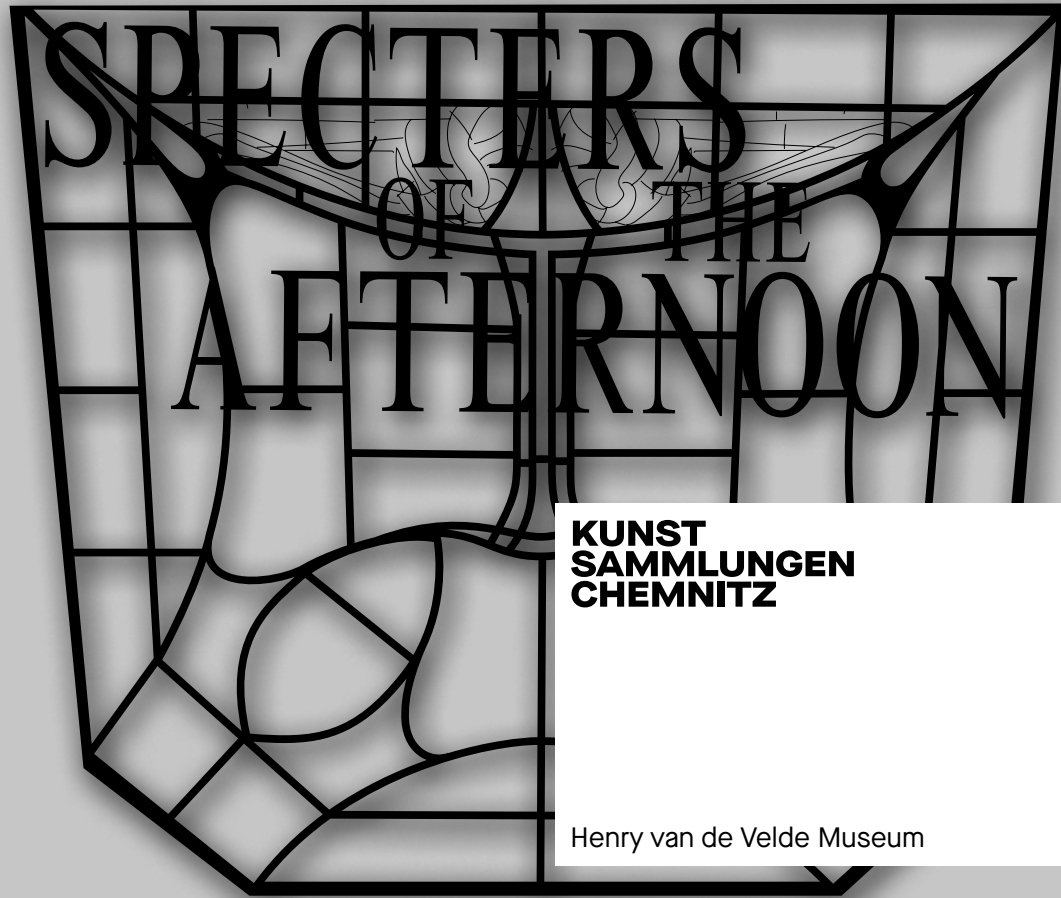


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## KUNST SAMMLUNGEN CHEMNITZ

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**KUNST  
SAMMLUNGEN  
CHEMNITZ**

Henry van de Velde Museum



Eine Mischung aus Gesang, Stimmen und Musik aus den Nebenräumen, Schritte auf knarzendem Dielenboden.



Rhythmische Schläge von Fingerspitzen auf der metallenen Oberfläche eines Musikinstrumentes, beruhigend.

seufzen, ächzen und kichern. Anfangs manuell betrieben, durchliefen sie während der industriellen Revolution eine Entwicklung vom mechanischen zum elektronischen Antrieb. Sie wurden schneller, effektiver und lauter. Der Jugendstil-Architekt Henry van de Velde lebte in der Zeit dieses akustischen Übergangs. Seine schwärmerischen Texte über Maschinen ähneln stark dem futuristischen Manifest von 1909. In der Klanginstallation werden sie collagiert und gesungen von einem »Chor der Futuristen«.

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Johanna Maj Schmidt  
***Eine Einstellung zum Reichtum / Richness in a Single Shot***, 2021  
 Videosammlung, fortlaufend



Auf einem Monitor, der sich hochkant zwischen den Möbelstücken im Museumsteil der Villa Esche einfügt, sind Smartphone-Aufnahmen aus anderen Häusern zu sehen. Die Künstlerin hat Personen weltweit eingeladen, Videos aus Häusern und Wohnungen zu sammeln, die in ihren Augen am ehesten »Wohlstand« repräsentieren. Die Aufnahmen folgen zwei Regeln: sie sollten in einer einzigen Einstellung und mit dem eigenen Smartphone gefilmt werden. Bis dato umfasste die wachsende Sammlung lautlose Einblicke in Privathäuser aus Berlin, Bogota, Bologna, Le Mans, London und Vilnius. Während früher der soziale Status und wirtschaftliche Erfolg in repräsentativen Räumen zur Schau gestellt wurde, scheint heute Privatheit wichtiger zu sein.

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Schmidt & Ruppert  
***Boy with Hang***, 2021  
 Performance



Performer: Andre Schmidt

Ein junger Mann in einem Ghillie-Suit, einem militärischen Tarnanzug, bewegt sich durch die Villa Esche und ihren Garten. Mit einem Feldhocker ausgestattet, lässt er sich an verschiedenen Orten in der Ausstellung nieder, an denen die Strategie der Camouflage unterschiedlich gut funktioniert. Sitzend spielt er Hang, ein UFO-förmiges Perkussionsinstrument, das im Jahr 2000 erfunden wurde und beruhigende Klänge hervorbringt. Die Performance etabliert eine Zwischenform aus ausgedehntem Tableau vivant und einem in eine einzige Handlung zusammengeschrumpften Drama. Die atmosphärische Wirkung der Performance unterbricht das Verständnis der Villa Esche als ein »Gesamtkunstwerk«, in dem nichts ungestaltet erscheinen darf.

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Jonas Roßmeißl  
***coordinated inauthentic behavior***, 2021  
 Skulpturale Intervention

