

Press Release

International Group Show *Lo(l) – Embodied Language*

Arno Beck, Gerry Bibby, Thomas Hirschhorn, Barbara Kapusta, Christine Sun Kim & Thomas Mader,
Nontsikelelo Mutiti, Katja Pilipenko, Émilie Pitoiset, Nora Turato

12 March – 1 May 2022

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Press preview: 11 March 2022, 11 am

Those who want to understand the present, must learn its language. Considering the changes within media landscape and the complex challenges posed by an increasingly globalized world, it becomes clear that our well-familiar vocabulary no longer adequately describes given realities.

LO was the first digitally transmitted message sent from the University of California in Los Angeles to the Stanford Research Institute in 1969. It was intended to be the word *login*, but the system crashed after the first two letters. Whereas the acronym LOL, deriving from internet slang, has become a firmly established element of youth language. *Laughing out loud* stands for an emotional response to something funny or extraordinary and reveals to which extent codification has become anchored in our daily use of language.

Only fifty years lie between the first attempts to exchange information via computer and today's use of language codes. Thus LO and lol reflect both the enormous speed of ongoing digital transformation and the formative influence it exerts on our communication behaviour. A strong focus on digitalization measures during the Corona pandemic has further accelerated the structural change in the past two years. Staying in touch – despite restrictions on contacts – through digital participation: new slang words, emojis, memes and acronyms have become an integral part of our globally networked interaction. Incorporating *digital body language* into our online behaviour has likewise allowed algorithms to draw conclusions on our needs, desires and intentions. Our digital body language is being analysed, evaluated and deliberately used as a temporary resource through an enhanced economy of attention.

The project *Lo(l) - Embodied Language*, combining various artistic approaches in large-format text, sound and video installations, examines how language, writing, images and sounds connect us digitally in real time and permeate our living and working worlds. Christine Sun Kim and Thomas Mader are showing the two-part work *Find Face* (2021) at Kunsthau Hamburg, using facial expressions to create an awareness of techno-human conditions of barrier-free communication. In Barbara Kapusta's installations, virtuality attains corporeality, and at the same time language, text and writing turn out to be sensual anthropomorphic motifs that inscribe themselves in spaces, as illustrated by her large-format wall piece developed for the exhibition. While Thomas Hirschhorn, with his poster series *I-nfluencer* (2021), positions himself as a "wannabe influencer" with numerous followers, communication as a social practice is at the centre of Nontsikelelo Mutiti's work. She integrates the digital realm into her wall writings by employing manual techniques as well as computer-assisted and photographic processes. Recent developments in information and communication technology, including the challenges and opportunities they present, are thus critically discussed in this group exhibition.

Curated by Anna Nowak

We will gladly provide you with press material upon request.

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