

from creatures to creators

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FROM CREATURES TO CREATORS

Death has recently come disturbingly close. Inevitably, as a result of the global pandemic, everyone is somehow confronted with mortality. However, it is not only because of the current situation that the desire for a long life has taken on a completely new meaning.

Through the paradigm of science, death is no longer a divine decree, but rather a technical challenge. According to the latest findings of biogerontologists, the life span can already be extremely extended with the help of the right tools. There are, for example, "biohackers" who are researching ways to intervene in the human organism to improve its performance, optimize the body or manipulate the DNA. Transhumanists likewise are increasingly seeking to overcome biological limitations through technological solutions. Inevitably, the question arises whether the development of an artificial intelligence (AI) on a par with humans does not actually mean the end of Homo sapiens.

The exhibition **from creatures to creators** explores concepts of humanity with regard to our future subsistence. It assembles international artists who, from multiple angles, shed a light on ways of dealing with our human existence, including future conceptions of it, and also dare to conjure visions going beyond the finite, conceiving the superhuman. Spanning installations, sculptures, murals and video works, the exhibition thus combines a wide range of artistic approaches, negotiating complex subject matter such as invisible lines of molecular (bio)power, processes of self-optimization, spiritual healing and the prospect of eternal life.

○ **Saelia Aparicio**
Animistic Aliens, 2021
Wallpaper

Fridge, 2021
Wood, glass, objects

Fursona, Ferine und Ursula, 2020
Wood, colour

Saelia Aparicio (b. 1982, Valladolid) explores inequality and sustainability through the motif of the body in her works inspired by comic and cartoon

films. For her, the physique, through its changing form, is a kind of mask, a wearing costume shaped by aging and disease. The artist cinematically takes her audience on journeys through digestive tracts, nerves and veins, while larding the bodies with knives and potted plants to point out the influence of the outside world on the inside and its hidden functions. Sometimes the figures in drawings and large-scale murals take off their skin, leaving it draped over chairs, sometimes creatures emerge under fingernails. In her humorous formal language, Aparicio symbolically tells of invasive species to housing problems or the climate crisis.

For the Kunsthau Hamburg the artist develops a new wall work, which she extends into an installation partly by already existing sculptures. In this way, bodies take the form of everyday objects, such as the three chairs *Fursona*, *Ferine* und *Ursula*. At the same time, bodily forms on the wall merge into hybrids in which the boundaries between human, animal, and plant attributes become blurred. Aparicio draws our attention to self- and external perception. By interpreting the human body as a building, she makes us reflect on our own sense of the body and questions the extent to which we feel inhabited in our bodies. In *Animistic Aliens*, she also shows how architecture can be conquered by nature in the form of Japanese knotweed, which is able to break up rock with its root system and strong growth. Similar to the Buddleja, introduced around 1900 as an exotic garden plant, its invasion makes it a problematic growth. Through the contextual shifts, the artist also addresses the power relations between man and his natural as well as artificially created environment.

Current and past exhibitions include La Casa Encendida, Madrid, 2019; wecollect, London, 2019; The Alexander Mc Queen Foundation Joyce, Hong Kong, 2019; The Gibberd Gallery, Harlow, 2018; Sarabande, London, 2018; Belmacz, London, 2018; Shelf Spanish city, UK, 2018; Fold Gallery, London, 2018; Hotel La Louisiane, Paris, 2018; The Tetley, Leeds, 2017; Turf Projects, Croydon, 2017; Changwon Sculpture Biennale, 2016; ASC gallery, London, 2016; SeMA NANJI Hall, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, 2016; Liverpool Biennale, 2016; The Cockpit, London, 2016; Chalton Gallery, London, 2016.

○ **Samara Daioub & Zion König**

forever no-body, 2021

VR glasses, video 3 min., 3 printed banners

Samara Daioub's (b. 1992, Nuremberg) videos, installations and films deal with the relation between fear and safety, among others, with social defence mechanisms, idealization and the vulnerability of the body as recurring themes.

Zion König's (b. 1997, Launing an der Donau) works primarily in the disciplines of game design CGIs and 3D character building. With a main interest in social dynamics, König addresses the relationship between utopia and dystopia, as well as fantasy and reality.

For the Kunsthau Hamburg, the two artists are developing a new work together with the use of virtual reality that questions the human body in the context of its optimization processes. How can we experience physical presence in virtual space? According to Cartesian theories such as René Decartes, assuming the separation of corpus and mind, the body is often understood as not present in VR. In the analogue realm, our own existence is assessed in relation to physis and the architectures we build ourselves, while our instinct for self-preservation strives for eternity. The body is at the same time a tool and something to be designed and optimized. In virtual space, however, we move in an immaterial state. As claimed by William Gibson, one of the main representatives of the cyberpunk genre, the desire for immortality also resonates here.

In the 360°-video, the states of instability and the urge for self-preservation are explored in a virtual world. After putting on VR glasses, you at first find yourself in the familiar exhibition hall; it functions as a transitional space between the analogue and the virtual. Then the space starts to break away around you. You leave behind the locally anchored body and architecture and are led into a new virtual reality. Here, the human, real processes of growth, decay, self-preservation and finding new forms of existence are abstracted, visualized and made tangible separately from the body. In their work, the artists make heterogeneous references to the world of cyberpunk, to the preservation of architectural structures and to social coexistence in times of a pandemic.

Current and past exhibitions of Samara Daioub include Wemaisnone, Berlin, 2019; The red floor gallery WdKA, Rotterdam, 2018; Kulturforum Berlin, 2017/2018; Friedrichstraße Berlin, 2017; OHM Berlin, 2018; University Of Arts Berlin, Rundgang 2015-2019.

○ **Ed Fornieles**

DER GEIST: FLESH FEAST, 2016

Video, 08:02 min.

Associations (selection), 2021

Large format inkjet prints on semi gloss photographic paper,
mount board with multi aperture windows

Ed Fornieles' (b. 1983, Petersfield) installations, interactions, video and wall works often deal with personal and public data that feed our insatiable attention economy.

"Who do you want to be?" is the question posed by the video *Der Geist: Flesh Feast*, 2016, representing a journey into self-management that considers the body and mind as a system to be understood, harnessed and controlled. The artist addresses the so-called biohacking, in which do-it-yourself biologists engage with natural sciences, in particular genetics and the modification or optimization of the human body. "It's scary to think of all the potential that is lost to those who don't have the courage to unleash it. – You don't find yourself, you create yourself." proclaims a voice in Fornieles' video. At the centre of his continually oscillating storm of images is a comic book fox as his artistic alter-ego. The fox reports on the recoding of one's own identity, which is designed to culminate in the hack of one's own behaviour through optimizing memory exercises and work-outs. Through cost-benefit analysis, the human being as a subject becomes a malleable object through targeted interventions, on the way to a supposedly better self.

In his new series *Associations*, 2021, arranged as square tiles and in interlocking rows and columns, the images also revolve around everything that constitutes life. Based on formal and conceptual associations, they bring different thematic facets into focus: destruction; biological and/or technological reproduction; the interplay of nature and culture; the consumption of food, bodies, images, and/or commodities. Sometimes conscious and deliberate, sometimes trance-like, intuitive and unreflective, chains of associations unfold that can be interpreted in many different ways, telling of individual and collective subjectivities as well as the interconnected state of contemporary images and the inseparability of both. The series highlights the ongoing dynamics of images that nowadays exist imperishably in a digital space that is at once human and non-human. At the same time, it points to the mental state that many social media companies seek to evoke in users in order to capture their attention and make them more manipulable to suggestion and instruction.

Current and past exhibitions include *Associations*, Carlos/Ishikawa, London, 2021; *Cel*, Center for Contemporary Art Futura, Prague, 2019; *I am large, I contain multitudes*, Gallery Wedding, Berlin, 2018; *Peace*, Schirn, Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2017; *Hybrid Layers*, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2017; *DO DISTURB. Festival non-stop*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2016; *Hack your body, upgrade your mind*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2016; *Truth Table*, Cura - Basement Roma, Rome, 2016, 2016; *Modern Family*, Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2014; *New York New York Happy Happy*, New Museum, New York, 2013; *The Dreamy Awards, Park Nights*, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2012; *Characterdate*, Frame, Frieze Art Fair, London, 2012; *Happy Days in Basel*, Theater Basel, 2012; *The Hangover Part II*, Carlos/Ishikawa, London, 2011.

○ **Pakui Hardware**

Thrivers, 2019

Glass, leather, silicone, metall, led lamps, fabric

Pakui Hardware (founded in 2014) is a collaborative artist duo consisting of **Neringa Černiauskaitė** (b. 1984, Klaipeda) and **Ugnius Gelguda** (b. 1977, Vilnius). They are particularly interested in the close relationship between technology and economics, with a primary focus on our physical reality and our attitude towards death.

Underlying the quest for immortality along with the related issues of transhumanism is the Cartesian worldview and its understanding of the separation of subject and object, mind and matter. Here, humans do not see themselves as part of nature, but rather elevate themselves above the environment by trying to control it. In Japan, for example, so-called “chimera experiments” were approved in 2019, taking research in the field of organ transplantation to a new level. This process involves breeding human stem cells in pig embryos in order to gain new insights into organ cultivation. The work *Thrivers*, 2019, by Pakui Hardware is also set in the context of such a biotechnological process. The artists themselves describe the glass objects as “porous hosts of life”. Mutable and fragile like the human body itself, the sculptures are reminiscent of organs or complex organisms based on a hybrid of a human being and a plant. In their overall composition, they represent a utopian-dystopian future scenario in which man emancipates himself from his own body. The work also questions to which extent technological developments are permeated by economic interests and how they, at the same time, shape physical reality itself, including the human body. Concerning the speed of technological change, matter is perceived as an obstacle and a vehicle alike in the work of Pakui Hardware.

Current and past exhibitions include East Contemporary, Mailand, 2021; Virtual Care, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, 2021; Günther-Peill-Stiftung 2018 - 2020/2, Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren, 2021; Absent Touch, Gebauer Galerie, Berlin, 2020; Underbelly, MdbK Leipzig, 2019; *Thrivers*, Polansky Gallery, Prag, 2019; The Seventh Continent, 16. Istanbul Biennale, 2019; Extrakorporal, Bielefelder Kunstverein, 2018; The Return of Sweetness, Tenderpixel, London, 2018; Creatures of Habit, Trafó Gallery, Budapest, 2017; Hesitant Hand, National Gallery of Art, Vilnius, 2017; Vanilla Eyes, MUMOK, Wien, 2016; Low Form, MAXXI Museum, Rom, 2019; Baltic Triennale 13, CAC Vilnius, 2018; Solar Bodies, Musee d'Orsay, Paris, 2018; Ungestalt, Kunsthalle Basel, 2017.

○ Alfred Kubin

Hans von Weber Portfolio, Nr. 524, 1989 facsimile reproduction of the art portfolio first published in 1903, in 800 copies, Edition Spangenberg, editor: Hans von Weber, Munich

Fifteen facsimile prints after pen drawings by the artist: *Science, The War, Epidemic, Starvation, Forgotten – Immersed, The Hour of Birth, The Best Doctor, The Hour of Death, After the Battle, The Pendulum, The Cry of Angst, The Horror, The Weakling, Human Fate, Power*

Around 1900, the average life expectancy was less than fifty years, and one's often unpredictable death was, from a Christian point of view, a collective, religious-ritual encounter with the "afterlife". In the course of secularization and with advancing prosperity and medical care, however, the understanding of the finiteness of life has radically changed in the Western industrialized regions. In this context, the Hans von Weber portfolio by **Alfred Kubin** (b. 1877, Leitmeritz – 1959, Zwicklekt) offers a historical reflection on the mortality of human beings, allowing manifold references to the contemporary works in the exhibition.

The oeuvre of the graphic artist, author and book illustrator is characterized by a tension between a sense of fear and the dreamworld, two aspects that to him were inseparably linked. Throughout Kubin's graphic oeuvre, we find classic subjects of transience, like the clock and the skull, which in his work oscillate between illusion and reality, actual perception and imagination. The threatening, oppressive and shadowy creatures and characters inhabiting his drawings reveal the abysmal sides of life – addressing especially notions of the void, the earthly, the brutal and the violent.

With his series of drawings of 1903, Kubin portrays the story of human fate of his time in his haunting, unconventional style. From the moment of birth, humans are faced with epidemics, starvation and wars. Under the regiment of ominous and devastating forces of fate, the individual sheets revolve in ever new forms around the topics of ruin, death and dependence, in *The Best Doctor*, for instance. In this drawing the figure lying on his deathbed appears as strangely oppressive: lying on a bed with his unnaturally long legs, his hands are folded on his chest in a praying gesture. According to a medieval ritual, this was the way people made their farewells to earthly life in so-called death houses until the 19th century. By this "art of dying" (*ars moriendi*), death was to be met by asking for the salvation of the soul. In Kubin's ink drawing death appears in the form of a bald, skeleton-like person, in reference to the iconography of *Madame Mors* who embodies death depicted as a woman. By not having death appear in a self-referential

function, but rather, based on the title, linking it with the role of a doctor, Kubin satirically denounces the arrogance and indifference of the doctors of his time, who tended to treat their patients like puppets, even if they were powerless in their state of emergency. In this picture, salvation from suffering seems possible only through death – the “best doctor” in the world.

○ **Mary Maggic**

Open Source Estrogen, 2015

Graphic manifesto

Housewives Making Drugs, 2017

Video, 10:12 min.

Mary Maggic (*1991, Los Angeles) is a non-binary artist working at the intersection of biotechnology, cultural discourse and civil disobedience. Their artistic practice include documentary videos, scientific methodology, public workshopology, performance and large-scale installations. They explore, among other things, how the ethos and methods of “biohacking” can serve to demystify the invisible structures of molecular (bio)power.

In the collaborative, interdisciplinary research project *Open Source Estrogen*, 2015, the artist combines do-it-yourself science, body and gender politics and ecological interconnectedness of the present. In response to the various biopolitics of hormonal control over female and trans-bodies being prescribed systemically and institutionally, the work aims to develop a system of DIY/DIWO protocols for the emancipation of the estrogen biomolecule. At Kunsthau Hamburg, Maggic’s graphic manifesto reveals the potential for genetic transformations and culturally constructed gender images – and encourages biological as well as digital gender hacking.

Belonging to *Open Source Estrogen* is also the video work *Housewives Making Drugs*, 2017. It features a fictional cooking show in which the two animators and transwomen Maria and Maria teach the audience how to make their own hormones in the kitchen, step by step, using a simple “urine-hormone extraction recipe”. The work challenges socially defined norms and sexual identities, including the way sexuality is represented in the media, and also addresses the difficulties faced by individuals undergoing hormone treatment. Set in the domestic and politicized space of the kitchen, Maggic likewise questions scientific reports and detaches them from their patriarchal and capitalist power structures. They stage a scenario in which the “housewife hacker” gains endocrinological knowledge and body/gender sovereignty, while subverting the traditional, gendered norms typically related to the kitchen. Maggic thus designs a world of less discrimination

and more self-determination. By revealing certain components of the complex web of epigenetic enmeshments, they shed a light how the ongoing hormonal poisoning of our environment influences our lives and puts them at risk.

Current and past exhibitions include Migros Museum Zurich, 2020; Art Laboratory Berlin, 2020; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2020; Center for Contemporary Arts, Prague, 2020; Science Gallery London, 2020; Mz Baltazars Lab, Vienna, 2019; Kampnagel, Hamburg, 2019; Tetem, Enschede, 2019.

○ **Bernard Picart**

Tithon, mari de l'Aurore, changé en cigale, / Tithonus, Aurora's Husband, Turned into a Grasshopper, 1730

Printed graphic work (reproduction)

The desire for a long or even eternal life exists among humans not just since the beginning of the 21st century. As documented in symbolic illustrations and stories, already the ancient cultures dealt with the topic of immortality. One of them is the Greek myth of Aurora and Tithonus. After the Roman goddess of dawn had fallen in love with and wedded the son of Laomedon, King of Troy, she asked Zeus to grant immortality to Thitonos. Zeus granted her this wish, but unfortunately, she had forgotten to ask for eternal youth to accompany the immortality. So, her beloved aged continually without being able to die. According to the poet Ovid, over time, he shrank to the extent that he finally took on the appearance of a tiny cicada.

In the historical copperplate engraving, *Tithon, mari de l'Aurore, changé en cigale / Tithonus, Husband of Aurora, Turned into a Grasshopper, 1730*, **Bernard Picart** (b. 1673, Paris – 1733, Amsterdam) shows Tithonus metamorphosing in Aurora's arms – only half human and already half cicada. With this depiction of a medical or rather a divine dilemma, Picart illustrates a fundamental conflict in the struggle against death. For what is notable in this mythical narrative is the inevitable dualism of infinite youth as a component of eternal life. Adolescence is understood as the phase of life most worth living and is equated with the visualization of a never-ending life. In addition to accepting the word meaning of immortality as a pure triumph over death, this results in a state of standstill in the youth phase. While the ancient Greeks spoke of the divine power of Zeus, nowadays the responsibility lies especially with medical research. From more or less harmless injections and surgical interventions in the human anatomy, to hormonal treatments, all the way to the fusion of man and machine, the longing for permanent youth seems to have become an integral part of our daily lives. By now, the quest

for responses to this yearning has found its way out of scientific laboratories into large parts of society.

○ **Tabita Rezaire**

Ultra Wet – Recapitulation, 2017 – 2018

Video installation, 11:18 min.

Tabita Rezaire (b. 1989, Paris) explores network sciences – organic, electronic and spiritual – as healing technologies. Confronting colonial legacies and their impact on our technologies, she sees her artistic work as a platform for social and political engagement against alienation to question prevailing power structures. The artist believes that infinity can be experienced spiritually, thus seeking to unfold a body-mind-soul unity. In an age of imbalance, with viruses spreading through our bodies, computers and across borders, she believes it is imperative that we heal ourselves in order to reboot our systems.

The pyramid-shaped video installation *Ultra Wet – Recapitulation*, 2017-2018, echoes the memory of a collective sovereignty in harmony with cycles of creation and destruction. It concentrates “healing energy” at the top of the pyramid, while its four sides retell stories of feminine-masculine energies. The dual paradigm of mxn-womxn, feminine-masculine, good-evil, right-wrong, life-death is woven into the fabric of our social, cultural and political territories. The fact that both energies reside within all of us and yearn for balance is rarely acknowledged. The work explores traces beyond duality and the violent imposition of gender norms. The imagery takes us from the village of Credo Mutwa in South Africa to the sandy landscape of Egypt amid computerized emanations to reclaim the legacies of feminine and masculine energies. As storytellers chant their litanies for survival, *Ultra Wet – Recapitulation* celebrates the power of eroticism as a creative and transformative force to be nurtured and cherished. The pyramid is an ode to the fertile ground we have been and can still be.

Current and past exhibitions include Cosmic Archeology, WAM, Turku, 2021; Moon Center, Guyane Art Factory, Cayenne, 2021; Immaculate Symbiosis, IMPAKT, Utrecht, 2021; Moon Center, Regelbau 411, Thyholm, 2020; OzAsia Festival, Adelaide, 2019; Unseen, Amsterdam, 2019; Hiroshima Museum of Art, 2019; Den Frie Udstillings, Copenhagen, 2019; Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, 2019; Pompidou, Paris, 2019; Wien Biennale, Vienna, 2019; MIA Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2019; Migros Museum for Contemporary Art, Zurich, 2019; PSM Gallery, Berlin, 2018; ARoS Art Museum, Aarhus, 2018; Museum of Modern Art Moscow, 2018; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2018; HeK, Basel, 2018; ICA London, 2018; Guangzhou Triennale, 2018; Athen Biennale, Athens, 2018; Kochi-Muziris Biennale, 2018; The Royal Standard, Liverpool, 2018; Auto Italia, London, 2017; Karachi Biennale, 2017.

○ **Amalia Ulman**

The Future Ahead, 2014

Video, 16 min.

Amalia Ulman's (b. 1989, Buenos Aires) intermedia art and installations address issues of class, gender identity and the influence of the internet on perceptions of femininity and masculinity in contemporary society.

She became known for the four-month performance *Excellences & Perfections*, 2014 on her Instagram account. In her posts, the artist created a fictional character that described her life as an It-girl. However, the selfies were mainly taken in hotels and restaurants in Los Angeles and posted as if Ulman was documenting her real life. By telling fictional stories on a platform designed for supposedly authentic behaviour and interactions, she illustrated how easily an audience can be manipulated through the use of mainstream archetypes and characters, and at the same time revealed the virtual construction of beauty ideals that shape girls and boys from a very early age.

The lecture-performance video *The Future Ahead - Improvements for the Further Masculinization of Prepubescent Boys*, 2014, shown at Kunsthaus Hamburg, also addresses feminine and masculine representation and digitally mediated sexuality in contemporary pop culture and social media. It is part of the immersive installation *The Destruction of Experience*. The artist explains in the accompanying text "*time, aging, becoming an object and not being allowed to age. Stretch marks and biological clocks. How much pain is a normal amount of pain? Nausea and diarrhoea are women's issues (...)*". Designed as a kind of operating room, the installation negotiates the desire to stop the aging process and at the same time refers to the finiteness of life through clocks and calendars. In the video essay, the artist collaged found film footage, animated gifs and sound effects to create a fictional story about the protagonist Justin Bieber. Among other things, she used images from the ironic Tumblr blog "*Lesbians Who Look Like Justin Bieber*" to question the pop star's masculinity and address the fiction of bio-femininity. In an infantilized voice and using fake medical data, the work explores polarizing online trends, including boys emphasizing their forehead wrinkles on social media and teenage girls, on the other hand, getting Botox injections to prevent forehead wrinkles before they even appear. The work humorously articulates rumours and conspiracy theories about gender roles and plastic surgery.

Current and past exhibitions include *Dignity*, James Fuentes, New York, 2017; *Intolerance*, BARRO, Buenos Aires, 2017; *Monday Cartoons*, Deborah Schamoni, Munich, 2017; *NEW WORLD 1717*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, 2017; *Atchoum!*, Galerie Sympa, Figeac, 2016; *Privilege*, Online-Performance, 2016; *Performing for the Camera*, Tate Modern, London, 2016;

Labour Dance, Arcadia Missa, London, 2016; Reputation, New Galerie, Paris, 2016; Annals of Private History, Frieze Live, 2015.

○ Emmanuel Van der Auwera

The Sky is on Fire, 2019

HD video, 15 min.

Emmanuel Van der Auwera (b. 1982, Brussels) explores simulation, trivialization and desensitization in the context of violence, including the recording of and response to catastrophic events in a multidisciplinary practice. In his videos, installations, theatre pieces he deals with human online existence and the desire for immortality, along with the yearning for catastrophe omnipresent in digital media. He thus constructs new paradigms for reading images of contemporary mass media and investigates their impact.

Though the places depicted in the video *The Sky is on Fire*, 2019 look real, they do not actually exist. Using mobile 3D technology, the artist scanned the streets and backstreets in Miami and digitally stitched the images together, now recalling a video game. The resulting cracks, negative spaces and visual flaws give the impression of a stagnant, apocalyptic landscape. With *The Sky is on Fire*, Van der Auwera creates a mystical non-place, drawing the viewer into an internet world in the state of decay. The work was inspired by the attack on the Parkland School in Miami where fourteen children and three adults were shot dead in 2018. The streetscapes scanned by Van der Auwera also include a reconstructed view of the surroundings of the school; they illustrate how a stroke of fate can suddenly wipe out lives. In *The Sky is on Fire*, the fact that we are mercilessly exposed to such disasters clashes with the internet phenomenon of wanting to be constantly present, which inevitably results in remaining forever visible on the web. Even if humans should at some point cease to exist, they will live on through the digital vestiges left behind on the internet: "*We are temporary, but what we do is permanent,*" the narrative voice in the video repeats again and again, thus leaving an indelible impression.

The video combines documentary, virtual and fictional genres with the aim of mapping overlaps of the physical and digital realm. Van der Auwera enquires into how we see what is lying outside our field of vision and how we can piece together the countless fragments found on the web. *The Sky is on Fire* is a critical reflection on our hyper-mediatized reality, demonstrating how strong the relationship is between our online existence and our desire for immortality.

Current and past exhibitions include House of Electronic Arts, Basel, 2022; Ars Electronica, Linz, 2020; Collection de la Province de Hainaut - BPS22, Charleroi, 2020; Jinan International Biennale, Shandong, 2020; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, 2020; Botanique, Brussels, 2019; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, 2019; KANAL - Centre Pompidou, Brussels, 2019; Fundación Otazu, Pamplona, 2019; Casino Luxembourg - Forum d'art Contemporain, Luxembourg, 2018; Mu.ZEE, Ostende, 2018; Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato, 2016; WIELS, Brussels, 2012; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2011.

○ **Steffen Zillig**

Die Dekolonisierung Amerikas (Preprint), 2021

30 inkjet prints

Based on narratives drawn from popular video platforms, **Steffen Zillig** (b. 1981, Mannheim) produces collaged comic strips and complex multichannel video installations. He is mainly concerned with a socio-critical examination of the challenges of our times.

For the exhibition at the Kunsthaus, he is creating a new series consisting of thirty comic strips. Alluding to the current trend of genetic research in the USA and questions regarding future forms of society, he develops a science fiction scenario in which people set out to find their ancestors: in a not-too-distant future, the government of the United States of America decides to send its originally "immigrated", meanwhile fully genetically decoded citizens back to their countries of origin – a remarkable attempt to re-establish a situation similar to that before the disastrous conquering of the American continent through European immigrants. Against this backdrop, each inhabitant is now allocated to the region of the world in which the majority of his genes allegedly places him. Convoys of "remigrants" thus are soon also heading for Europe, despite the fact that, for decades, there has been no contact with the quirky continent on the other side of the Atlantic. Europe has isolated itself and long ago ceased to be interested in anything concerning the rest of the world, when refugee boats from America suddenly reach the French coast.

In *Die Dekolonisierung Amerikas (The Decolonization of America)*, 2021, the artist describes a fictive future compiled from elaborately collaged fragments taken from popular culture. He combines excerpts from old and new adventure comics with blurred photographs drawn from the internet.

Supplementing the images, he concocts a fictional story of upheavals and conflicts which often do not appear as more adventurous than reality. The artist's comic will be published as a bilingual booklet in the fall of 2021.

Current and past exhibitions include Deichtorhallen Hamburg/ Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg, 2019; Neues Museum, Nuremberg, 2018; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westphalen, Duesseldorf, 2014; Galerie Conradi 2017; Gallery Zwinger, Berlin, 2020; Gallery Max Meyer, Duesseldorf, 2014.

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