

# TURNING POINTS

Works from the Collection von Kelterborn

## Descriptions of Works

## 1 Igor Simić , *Digidopamine*, 2019, neon lettering, 280 x 25 cm // *Zuck*, 2019, neon lettering, 20 x 25 cm

Both of the neon works by the Serbian artist **Igor Simić** that are shown in the exhibition are taken from his award-winning computer game *Wasteland*. It plays in a time where, after an ecological catastrophe, the super-wealthy have emigrated to Mars and only return to Earth to play golf. The two words refer to our online culture. **Zuck** alludes to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who revolutionised the Internet with his social network, but is currently facing criticism due to a lack of data protection and the dissemination of fake news on his platform. On the other hand, **digidopamine** refers to mechanisms that various online platforms use to activate the brain's reward system that is based on the neurotransmitter dopamine, their aim is to make us spend as much time as possible on the platforms, often without even realising.

## 2 Jochen Gerz, *Revolut...*, 1971, display case with dice, 24 x 22 cm

Democracy and society are the main focus of the conceptual artist **Jochen Gerz's** work. In the text-based work *Revolut...*, he demonstrates that the outcomes of historical upheavals largely remain open. As a result, revolutions, that for the most part aim to alter history in a particular direction, rarely or only partially achieve their goal. The dice that remain do not contain the letters to complete the word 'revolution'. Therefore, historical processes turn out to be determined less by fate than by chance.

## 3 Bjørn Melhus, *You are not alone*, 2013, mixed media, 60,5 x 123 x 81 cm

The German-Norwegian artist **Bjørn Melhus** explores contemporary film and pop culture in his work. For the sculpture *You are not alone* he modified a football table so that one single goalkeeper faced 22 players. The uniform likeness of the majority wearing blue jerseys contrasts with the goalkeeper's white clothing. In doing so, the work illustrates mechanisms of exclusion, but also points out the fundamental social conflict between the interests of the individual versus the interests of a collective.

## 4 Claire Fontaine, *Sell Your Debt*, 2012, neon letters, 107 x 9 cm

**Claire Fontaine** is a fictional character named after a well-known French brand for school exercise books. Fulvia Carnevale and James Thornhill, who act as the artist's assistants, are behind the project. Claire Fontaine tackles complex economic principles in her work *Sell Your Debt*. The work can be read as a cryptic commentary on the global financial crisis of 2008. When the real estate bubble burst, it turned into a personal debt trap for many. But others continued to earn, as they had for years before, through trading in debt and bonds, something that is not available to everyone.

## 5 Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis, *Swatted*, 2018, single-channel video, 21 min

Digitalisation is an essential factor of our present living environment. New technologies do not only change the way we communicate, but also our relationship with ourselves and our surroundings. At the same time, it seems that the boundaries between the virtual world and the 'real' are increasingly being blurred. In the video work *Swatted*, the French artist **Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis** examines the life-threatening phenomenon of cyberbullying. Swatting is the term used when callers send an armed S.W.A.T. (Special Weapons and Tactics) team to the homes of online gamers under the guise of a serious violent crime while they are playing live and often assuming the role of special forces themselves. Suddenly, a real danger enters the gamers world, and the shock changes their lives significantly. The film was made without a camera. It is based on 911 calls from perpetrators as well as YouTube videos of swatting incidents and testimonials from those affected. These are interwoven with animated sequences that reflect the aesthetics and graphic nature of computer games. An unreal atmosphere emerges, in which play and bitter seriousness seem to increasingly resemble each other.

**6 / 7** Mariana Vassileva, *Microfon*, 2017, mixed media, 130 cm // *Will they be friends one day?*, 2011, gold-plated nail, rusty nail, handwriting

Bulgaria-born artist **Mariana Vassileva's** work revolves around violence, pain, homelessness and exposure to hierarchies active within everyday life. She pointedly depicts complex relationships in her photographs, drawings, videos and objects. In the work *Microfon*, she replaces the mouthpiece of a microphone with a stun grenade conjuring up the wounding but also transformative power of language. On the other hand, in *Will they be friends one day* she subtly makes social inequalities visible.

**8 / 9** Clemens Krauss, *Selbstporträt als Objekt/Großmutter's Stuhl*, 2010, Wood, silicon, hair, various materials, 85 x 64 x 70 cm // *What remains of the irrational? (I-IV)*, 2010, digital print, each 30 x 20 cm

The artist **Clemens Krauss** makes his own body the focus of his work and subjects it to various processes of alienation. For the portrait series *What remains of the irrational?* he had the Graz police make phantom pictures of himself based on descriptions by his family members. The result is four very different portraits that reveal the family's various views of the artist, yet do not render him tangible. In the work *Self Portrait as Object* he covered his grandmother's old armchair with a deceptively real-looking replica of his skin, including body hair, moles and nipples. Being devoid of the corresponding living body and transformed into a new form, it is precisely the natural-looking structure of the surface of the skin that creates a feeling of alienation and disgust but also of fascination.

**10** **Stuart Bird, *POP POP POP (AK-47)*, 2009, nickel-plated bronze, wood, 190 x 55 cm**

South African artist Stuart Bird refers with the lettering AK-47 to the Kalashnikov, the famous Soviet Russian automatic assault rifle. The acronym stands for Automat Kalashnikov and the year 1947, in which the first prototype was created. In the English-speaking world the designation AK-47 was adopted for the entire family of weapons. Due to its simple construction and robustness, the Kalashnikov is the most widely used rapid firearm in the world. It accounts for a quarter of a million deaths per year and is used in both military conflicts and terrorist attacks. The deformed bullets found on the lettering point to the devastation that this weapon leaves in its wake. At the same time, however, they resemble popcorn and refer in this way to the cult status of the rifle that is so often featured in films and computer games.

**11** **Hito Steyerl, *Is the Museum a Battlefield?* 2013, two-channel video installation, 39:53 min.**

By interweaving documentary film sequences and associative thought games into a lecture given at the Istanbul Biennial, **Hito Steyerl** exercises institutional critique in her work *Is the Museum a Battlefield?* She posits the thesis that museums have historically always been battlefields, and still are today, for example when revolutionaries stormed the Louvre or the Hermitage. When in 1998 she investigated the origin of a machine gun bullet that killed her childhood friend Andrea Wolf, a PKK fighter, she discovered that the producer of this ammunition, the weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin, was both a sponsor of the Istanbul Biennial and patron of her exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, where she showed the film about Wolf's death. She also established a further connection through the architect Frank Gehry, who designed both prestigious museum buildings and the Lockheed Martin headquarters in Berlin. Hence, for Hito Steyerl, museums are always to be regarded as battlefields, as "scenes of current social conflicts and entanglements" (Hito Steyerl).

## **12 Gary Hill, *Beauty is in the Eye*, 2011, stereo viewer, HD video, 2 giclée prints**

Gary Hill animates life-sized photographs using a stereoscopic apparatus. When viewing the works arranged at an angle to one another through the binocular-like apparatus, the two large-format bodies, clothed in some kind of future clown costumes, merge into a single three-dimensional image. This entity then presents a digital flower. The psychedelic-looking setting is reflected in the video projection opposite that shows normal people emerging from the darkness to receive an offered flower with seemingly drug-induced ecstasy.

## **13 Hu Weiyi, *Ceep Crawling*, 2012, single-channel video, 3:22 min.**

In the video work *Ceep Crawling*, Hu Weiyi transforms a crossroads in Shanghai into a war zone. Toy soldiers crawl across the street between the cars, public buses and motorcycles. Most of them are crushed bit by bit under the wheels of the vehicles. Our everyday world becomes an essential struggle for survival for the little soldier figurines. Thus, the Chinese artist succeeds, in a pointed and humorous manner, at drawing attention to social conditions in which only those who know how to navigate their way through are able to survive. With the pink thongs that the soldiers wear, he points out the especially difficult situation for homosexuals in China. At the same time, Hu Weiyi also transports a computer game scenario into the real urban space with this work.

## **14 Barbara Klemm, *Fall der Berliner Mauer*, 2014, digital print, 430 x 325 cm**

The photographer **Barbara Klemm** documents the turning point in the history of the two Germanies with her photographs of the fall of the Berlin Wall. She had already been capturing the reality of life in the Eastern Bloc since the 1970s, and in 1989 she captured the moment when the world changed seemingly overnight.

**15** Jarosław Kozłowski, *Rhetorical Figures II*, 2006, LED light strip 25,5 x 100 cm

The Polish artist Jarosław Kozłowski alienates everyday objects in his works, wherein his special interest lies in language and the media as a source of our perception of the world. With the LED illuminated lettering, he utilises a means of communication that is typically used to spread the latest news or advertising messages in public spaces. The slogan **No News**, however, denies any information and thus stands in opposition to the constant barrage of supposedly groundbreaking news that demands our attention on a daily basis.

**16** Teboho Edkins, *Initiation*, 2016, HD video, 10:39 min.

The video *Initiation* was made in Lesotho, a monarchical enclave in South Africa, where **Teboho Edkins** grew up. The film is preceded by a photograph of the artist, in which he is seen as a six-year-old dressed in a traditional shepherd's costume. The short film itself accompanies the young shepherd Moskau. He is waiting for his brother to return from a five-month rite of passage at a secret location in the mountains. What his brother experienced during this time is known only to the participants of the ritual. The decisive step into adult life remains invisible, which leads Moskau, who is still to undergo it, to fear, insecurity but also awe. At the end the film shows the return of the young men, adorned and singing in a traditional technique with deep voices, as if in a trance. Thereby the artist preserves the secret of the transformative moment.

**17** Teboho Edkins, *Gangster Backstage*, 2013, single-channel video, 37:30 min. // 9 black and white photographs, each 42x27,5 cm, newspaper ad (reproduction), 2012

The video works by film director **Teboho Edkins**, who grew up in Lesotho, revolve around individual experience and processing of important life events, with each of the works shown being part of a larger body of work. The short film ***Gangster Backstage*** and the corresponding portrait photos of the protagonists began with a newspaper advertisement aimed at attracting real gangsters to act in a film in Cape Town. The resulting work shows casting footage of the protagonists. Intense conversations in which they report on the brutal reality of their lives that are marked by violence, death and prison sentences, are interspersed with sequences in which they perform scenes from their lives in a minimalist stage setting for the prospective film. The short film carefully explores the fragility of its protagonists' lives, that they lead in anticipation of a sudden and violent death.

**18** Gary Hill, *Pacifier*, 2014, 3-channel video and sound installation, 5:07 min // *Untitled (Fat Man and Little Boy)*, 2014, two glass sculptures, 51,5 x 51,5 x 84 cm and 33,5 x 33,5 x 91,5 cm

It is not only current but also historical turning points that occupy a central position in the exhibition. In the monumental video ***Pacifier***, **Gary Hill**, a pioneer of extended video art both sculpturally and in installations, focuses on the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For this he made scaled-down, glass replicas of the bombs ***Fat Man*** and ***Little Boy***, and dropped them from a height of 30 feet. Filmed with a high-speed camera and then replayed in slow-motion accompanied by a high-pitched whistling sound, the smashing of the lethal weapons becomes an aesthetic event that oscillates between destructiveness and vulnerability.



**19** Slavs and Tatars, *Weeping Window (Morgenländer)*, 2017, mixed media, 55 x90 x 10 cm

In its exhibitions, books and performative lectures, the artist collective **Slavs and Tatars** is concerned with the area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Chinese Wall. The artists understand this intermediate area, in which Asia and Europe meet and merge, as a space in which borders and identities are constantly being renegotiated. The work focuses on a playful and humorous use of language, writing and signs. In *Weeping Window (Morgenländer)*, Slavs and Tatars wittily question the complexity and contradictions of identity attributions.

**20** Maria José Arjona, *Right at the Center, there is Silence*, single-channel video, 5:42 min.

The video *Right at the Center, there is Silence* is part of a long-running performance that deals with all of the connotations and meanings inherent in inner silence. While she is surrounded on four sides by sharp-edged knives that are threateningly close to her neck, the artist **Maria José Arjona** has to find her own inner center and stability in order to protect herself from the blades. The apparent threat mixes with an almost meditative attitude that requires extreme concentration. In this work, Arjona places herself in the tradition of body art from the late 1960s/early 1970s, in which the artist's own body was mostly used as a performative material.

**21** Marcel Odenbach, *Im Schiffbruch nicht schwimmen können*, 2011, HD-video, 8:15 min

War and climatic disasters are forcing more and more people to seek refuge. In his video *Im Schiffbruch nicht schwimmen können*, Marcel Odenbach shows three men of various ages looking at the painting *Das Floß der Medusa* (1819) by Théodore Géricault in the Louvre. The ruthless portrayal of the 1816 shipwreck was once shocking to the public. After the French frigate 'Medusa' ran aground, 149 people saved themselves by climbing aboard a raft that was supposed to be pulled ashore by boats. However, after only a short time, the connection was severed leaving the castaways helplessly adrift at sea for days. Only 15 people survived. In Odenbach's video, the observation of the men, who in turn look at the tragedy of the Medusa, is combined with sequences of crashing waves on Ghana's coast. These almost meditative images are accompanied by quotes from the three men whom Odenbach interviewed at length about their experiences of 'flight'.

**22** Emilie Pitoiset, *Pretty Pimpin'*, 2016, mixed media, 12 x 18 cm

Hands are one of the strongest, non-verbal expressive means of human communication. By focusing her attention on these parts of the body and presenting us with the *Pretty Pimpin'* hand - often in a kind of coloured leather glove - detached from the rest of the body, Emilie Pitoiset's position becomes a clear statement. A 2-Euro coin protrudes boldly from between the index and middle finger, recalling the enticing game of chance, whose deceptive promise affects every level of society and has lost none of its attraction over the centuries.

**23** Henrike Naumann, *Desolation*, 2014, sound installation, 260 x 216 x 42 cm

**Henrike Naumann** turns to radical islamism in her sound installation *Desolation*. Her work examines the radicalisation of the Kreuzberg gangster rapper Deso Dog, who joined the IS in 2012 to fight in Syria. There he used propaganda videos as adverts and "fight Nasheeds" (Islamic acapella songs) to enthuse the German youth about violent jihad, he also participated in a decapitation video. Using a compilation of audio material from various videos, the sound installation traces Deso Dog's individual radicalisation in a sensitive manner, from the beginning of his career as a rapper to his sudden departure from music and his activities for IS. While listening, each visitor must kneel on a chair from the 90's in front of a black wall unit, that is reminiscent of both an altar and a sarcophagus. In doing so, they assume the pose that the prisoners of the IS were forced into during their brutal execution.

**24** Henrike Naumann, *Four Words*, 2015, wall tattoo on woodchip wall paper, 40 x 50 cm

**Henrike Naumann** deals with processes of radicalisation in her work. Growing up in East Germany during the 1990s, she experienced the rise of right-wing ideas in the post-reunification period up to the terrorist attacks of the NSU. She intensely examines how personal experiences and certain milieus and youth cultures contribute to radicalisation. She is particularly interested in the political attitudes and social contexts that objects and their everyday aesthetics conceal. Hence, her use of found objects and materials in her work. This is also true of the work *Four Words*, whose lettering can be purchased as a wall tattoo at right-wing extremist online shops. The individually framed words, written in the Fraktur typeface, make up a familiar slogan. Originally used as a protest against the repressions in the GDR, the slogan in its current right-wing populist appropriation and reinterpretation now affirms a majority with homogenous identities in order to target refugees, migrants and those who think differently.