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## Down The Rabbit Hole

*with Offert Albers, Philipp Baumann, Yukie Laurentia Beheim, Janine Böckelmann, Philippe Derlien, Sven Dirkmann, Viktoria Feierabend, Magda Frauenberg, Alexander Gdanietz, Christoph Görke, Sonja Heim, Konstantin Holle, Franka Hörnschemeyer, Jella Jess, Konstitutiv der Möglichkeiten, Aljoscha Lahner & Dennis Buckland, Ye Li & Antonia Hermes, Pia Litzenberger, Philipp Naujoks, Swinda Oelke, Karoline Schultz, Anna Shpak, Pauline Simon, Linda Skellington, Sophie Isabel Urban, Emil Walde and Flora Weber*

In the group exhibition of Prof. Franka Hörnschemeyer's class at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, the participating artists work across a range of media, posing questions about relationships in and with space. In doing so, they pay particular attention to the observation of the extraordinary KIT architecture. As the title "Down The Rabbit Hole" suggests, the exhibition follows the movement of descending and deepening into the space: On one hand, this entails the danger of losing oneself, on the other hand it may offer the opportunity to discover something unexpected or new. The rabbit hole is, as in Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland*, an entrance to another world. In the exhibition, the expression "rabbit hole" can also refer to the seemingly infinite worlds of the Internet, where links and hyperlinks tempt users to click through to ever new pages. In a wholly analogous way, by contrast, the artists and their works invite us to move away from our own viewpoint, either purposefully or aimlessly, and to assume new perspectives. Rabbit holes are also social shelters. Similarly, the subterranean exhibition space offers the opportunity to perceive art in a supposedly safe, yet isolated environment.

For the work *machine grants wishes*, **Pia Litzenberger (1)** modified a children's Claw Crane, inviting visitors to try their hand at this game of chance for one euro.\* The model contains "surprise eggs" with a coat of arms that depicts clouds and waves – symbols for the habitat of flying fish. The machine can be seen as the fish's breeding ground, whereas the claw arm might be viewed as a "thieving" human arm intervening in the natural habitat.

\*Warning: Gambling is addictive. If you need help, contact a professional counselling centre. You can contact the free and anonymous "Infoline Glücksspielsucht" of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs NRW at 0800 0776611 (German-speaking) and 0800 3464726 (Turkish-speaking).

**Viktoria Feierabend (2)** displays her work  $:= / =:$  (*ouvertes, bleues et noires*) within the sky light connecting the exhibition space to the Rhine Promenade. There, the artist places a series of matches following the shapes of light and shadow reflections. She set them ablaze even before the exhibition opened: The trace of the burnt out flames triggers a feeling of being "too late" to the action, of having missed out on something.

Nearby, **Yukie Laurentia Beheim (3)** takes visitors into the realm of Japanese Noh theatre, which is traditionally performed by men only. The *Two Shōjō* masks\* depict the drunken and kindly water spirit *Shōjō*. They are installed at eye level, inviting us to assume the viewpoint of *Shōjō* and to dive deeper into the world of demons, gods and spirits.

\*Please don't touch the mask!

With the work *Creaking hinges, hollow shells*, **Antonia Hermes and Ye Li (4)** have created a type of hinge, made of fiberglass and polyester, that blocks the view of the end of the narrowing entrance area. It is reminiscent of the garishly coloured Polly Pocket boxes of the 1990s and aims to transform the visitors into toy figures in their artificial microcosm.

The silvery cans by **Konstitutiv der Möglichkeiten (5)** invites visitors to slowly find their way between the shining “tree trunks”. Upon closer inspection, the glossy stalks turn out to be beverage cans, some of which are in the familiar Red Bull design. With their work called *Matchbox Moments*, the artists Nina Nick and Valerie Buchow take a probing look at this polarising corporation, which represents extreme sports to some, populist publicity to others.

In the video installation *The sources are disputed*, **Dennis Buckland and Aljoscha Lahner (6)** introduce us to colliding dimensions of the outside and inside. One video shows a colonoscopy, which can diagnose digestive diseases. On the other channels footage from KIT and from long, seemingly futile Alpine hikes are juxtaposed.

The wooden installation *Normaldistributor* by **Jella Jess, Philipp Baumann, Konstantin Holle, Flora Weber and Philippe Derlien (7)** makes it impossible to move freely: Cabin-like spaces are connected only by closed doors. The unknown beckons and curiosity is sparked, prompting the visitor to venture deeper and deeper into this space that somewhat resembles a trap.

By expanding cantilever chairs with long stainless-steel tubes in *Vertigo*, **Magda Frauenberg (8)** thematises the fall and loss of control into an unknown world. Like Alice in Wonderland, we plummet into the rabbit hole, which reveals another dimension of seeing and feeling.

**Alexander Gdanietz's (9)** work *All the best, 52 years WBS 70* is an architectural model of the eponymous slab building in Marzahn, Its scale far exceeds the size of common models, influencing the movement of the body around it. With his work, the artist scrutinises life in satellite cities and asks how we will cohabitate in the future.

In his series *9 192 631 770*, **Phillip Naujoks (10)** combines materials and techniques from painting and photography. In the darkroom, he uses laser beams to draw lines directly onto the canvas, creating a kind of map that needs to be deciphered.

Prehistoric crabs spill out of a toppled-over sack and lie scattered on the floor. **Sonja Heim's (11)** small creatures are made of wire and glass beads, whereas their real-life counterparts are often to be found in fish food or children's experiment boxes. Thus, the work *Unfortunately my palms are sweaty* questions the degradation of living fossils to pure entertainment.

In *Inherited Wounds*, **Linda Skellington (12)** taps into the phenomenon of recognising what appear to be human faces in patterns: With pastels on canvas, she creates a collection of human and animal forms, allowing visitors to descend into a world full of fairytale-like hybrid beings.

**Emil Walde's (13) *Hatch*** draws on the spatial features of KIT: It is an architectural extension of the light entering through the second sky light. The structure, reminiscent of a pyramid, hides a small room, the “hatch”, in which the artist shows a video work.

Emil Walde is kindly supported by the German Federal Government for Culture and Media, Neustart Kultur and the Professional Association of Visual Artists (BBK).

A ladder knitted from fragile yarn and entitled *more heaven less hell* dangles from the ceiling of KIT: This work by **Janine Böckelmann (14)** is enticing, for it tempts us to climb up the steps and leave the exhibition room. However, neither the delicate wool nor the positioning can really fulfil this longing.

Dotted around the exhibition space are plastic household buckets filled with water. The surface keeps rippling in concentric circles. In *Leak* **Pauline Simon (15)** plays on the expectation that there is a real waterdrop dripping into the buckets. In reality, a small machine emits shock waves into the water, simulating the drop.

As the title *OppositeDifferent\_DifferentOpposite* indicates, this work by **Karoline Schultz (16)** echoes the doppelgänger phenomenon: Two corresponding objects are suspended in the rear part of the tunnel. Both are made of narrow aluminium rods and magnifying glasses. In the dark space, they give the impression of eerie underwater animals.

**Swinda Oelke (17)** presents the site-specific work *converging parallels* where the walls of the tunnel converge. She renders visible the direct environment of the car tunnels from which KIT is shielded by concrete walls. These images are projected onto mirrors that rotate around themselves, making the videos travel along the walls.

The video installation (*authenticity*) by **Offert Albers (18)** consists of two screens depicting the investigation of authenticity of a prominent design object, an *Eames EA107 aluminium chair*. On the left, we see two protagonists researching the history of the chair, on the right, the camera searches the object for the features of “authenticity”.

In his publication *dunes*, **Christoph Görke (19)** approaches the complex structures of the production and reproduction of images. The book offers a glimpse into the underlying structures of images, describing them as a reality that is placed around and within us. The *Schalung* offers flexible and changeable seating for the reader.

The canvases *Long Time No See* by **Sven Dirkmann (20)** were also embroidered with wool and confront visitors with three sinister-looking creatures whose geometrically arranged lines shift

depending on the angle from which they are viewed. This and the figures' protruding eyes help to dissolve the roles of observer and the one who is observed.

The joints and holes in the concrete walls of KIT serve as inspiration for **Anna Shpak's (21)** work *G=5(66xx65xa)*. Five wooden elements refer to the mostly overlooked refractions in the wall and the unclear depth between two concrete slabs. Like a spine, the work extends upward from floor to ceiling.

In the print work series *Pegel* and *Unterbau* from **Sophie Isabel Urban (22)**, blurred surfaces meet sharp, graphic lines. Using a paste made of abrasive metal sand, the artist creates dark planes and carves lines into the surface of the canvas with a needle. The paintings depict architectural elements like tunnels, pillars, and spirals.

The professor of the class, **Franka Hörnschemeyer (23)**, also created a work for the exhibition. *Beyond That Black Beyond* comments the broad installation of KIT in a modest way.

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