

MEDIA INFORMATION

DURST

Group Exhibition

Duration: WED, 01 07 – FRI, 14 08 2020

Artists: Inka ter Haar, Lauren Huret, Céline Manz, Alexandra Meyer, Sarah Rechberger, Katharina Swoboda, Anne Cathrin Ulikowski

Guest Curator: Alice Wilke

PRESS TOUR: WED, 01 07 2020; 9:30 am

**PRESS and
IMAGE MATERIAL:** www.kunstraum.net/en/press

PROGRAMME:

Public Tours

THU, 02 07 2020, 5:00 pm (**Curator Tour** with Alice Wilke)

SAT, 04 07 2020, 1:00 pm (with Katharina Brandl und Clemens Rettenbacher)

SAT, 25 07 2020, 1:00 pm (with Nicole Sabella)

Performance Workshop

Wühlen im Archiv

SAT, 11 07 2020, 11:00 am - 03:00 pm

Carmilla Reading Group

with Clemens Rettenbacher

THU, 28 05 2020, 5-6:30 pm ONLINE

THU, 18.06.2020, 5-6:30 pm ONLINE

THU, 25.06.2020, 5-6:30 pm ONLINE

wienXtra Sommerferienspiel (10 to 13 years)

Vamp Camp

THU, 30 07 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm

FRI, 31 07 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm

SAT, 01 08 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm

THU, 06 08 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm

FRI, 07 08 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm

SAT, 08 08 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm

DURST— *The Fuel of the Present*

Undead, sex maniac, bloodsucker: The myth of the vampire and the associated attributes – immortality, seduction, power – are firmly anchored in society’s collective fears and desires. In the exhibition DURST (= THIRST) the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich explores the vampirism of the present. For guest curator Alice Wilke, this metaphor for acts of depletion and parasitic existences, for transformation and symbiotic relations represents a fundamental sociocultural phenomenon: “What drives us, how do our fears and cravings manifest? And how do we align these essential aspects of being with the everyday life that surrounds us? I see the figure of the vampire – and its main drive, thirst – as a pars pro toto of these questions and as a lasting, relevant mirror of mechanisms at work in our society.”

The Insatiable Craving for the Liquid

The present-day dictate of productivity and self-optimisation forces us to feed the system with our very own vitality: a thirst that can never be satisfied, for every temporary appeasement only produces a new desire. The exhibition THIRST focuses on this “fluid” nature of our time and its transformative potential by conceiving vampirism as a broad semantic field, in which the literary figure of the vampire fades into the background in favour of its essential characteristics: the appropriation of foreign resources, the strive for immortality, strategic seduction, metamorphosis.

Seven artistic positions from the realms of painting, drawing, video art, performance, installation, and sculpture stake out today's vampirism within the field of contemporary art and shed light on its aesthetic, medial, social, historical, and biological dimensions. Each in their own way, the presented works negotiate the relational character of the vampire myth – vampirism sets us in relation with the world that surrounds us. "In the best case, as the works in the exhibition illustrate, these liquid processes entail not just a mere sucking dry, rather reciprocal dynamics and dialogical exchange." (Alice Wilke)

Artistic Positions

Inka ter Haar (DE/CH)

The Garden (3 of 6), 2020

In her work Inka ter Haar links her artistic practice with sociological issues. The series *The Garden* (2020) deals with aspects of growth, transformation, healing, and self care. The underlying motif is the garden, the "hortus conclusus" as a medieval metaphor for – primarily female – purity and perfection: Ancient ideals the artist critically explores in the present context with its multifarious attempts towards permanent self-optimisation. For Inka ter Haar, transformation processes are not only the content and subject of her paintings. The creative process itself is based on diverse metamorphoses and evolves on multiple layers: thoughts and emotions in small-scale drawings are transferred to the canvas, gradually building up to the painting.

Inka ter Haar, *1980 in Duisburg, lives and works in Basel.

Lauren Huret (FR/CH)

Ways of non-seeing, 2016

Les larmes blanches, 2019

Lauren Huret's work examines the ways new communication and media technologies influence the conditions of social relations and change them profoundly. For her video work *Ways of non-seeing* (2016) Huret filmed in the National Museum in Warsaw with a smartphone camera. Using a face recognition app, the visages of sculptures and in paintings overlapped with that of the protagonist and merged into grotesque masks or grimaces – an effect that ultimately reveals the momentous limitations the software has in its field of application. In her second video *Les larmes blanches* (2019) the artist

combines a photograph of the burning Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris, which was given to her by an eye witness, with a number of her own animations, including a rain of tears. The title "White Tears" makes reference to the contemporary discourse on decolonisation, on cultural identity and its abuse. Accordingly, Huret inserts the faces of influential yet controversial global entrepreneurs, politicians, industrialists, and CEOs of large corporations into the raindrops – giving the German term "tränenreich", literally "rich with tears", a new twist – to address the social tensions between financial expenditures to restore symbols of power and the widespread poverty of the population.

Lauren Huret, *1984 in Paris, lives and works in Geneva.

Céline Manz (CH/UK)

fold; Capes, 2019/2020

I have crossed oceans of time to find you, 2019/2020

In her artistic practice Céline Manz masterfully employs various strategies of appropriation to generate multiple authorship. The work *fold; Capes* (2019/2020) from her work series *fold;* is based on sketches by Sophie Taeuber-Arp, which Jean Arp posthumously realised as reliefs. Manz combines them on a double-sided cape of her own design to open up a dialogue with the archive material. The two-part video installation *I have crossed oceans of time to find you* (2019/2020) is based on subsequently edited visual material and found footage, whose aesthetics are reminiscent of sequences from horror films. Among them is a photograph from Anne Vallayer-Coster's oil painting *Panaches de mer, lithophytes et coquilles* (1769), which depicts, among other things, creatures that suck their food from the ground on which they grow.

Céline Manz, *1981 in Zurich, lives and works in Basel and London.

Alexandra Meyer (CH)

Portraits, 2015–2017

For her project *Portraits* (2015–2017) Alexandra Meyer expertly took and conserved blood samples from people she selected from her artistic circles. These individual

depictions, small vials filled with personal data and intimate information indirectly contained in the blood samples, represent true portraits of these persons. Furthermore, the work reflects on the social dynamics and economic mechanisms at work in the art industry, in which devotion and sacrifice in the name of art are still propagated as ideals to this day. For the exhibition DURST, Alexandra Meyer has expanded her series with blood portraits of two people involved in the exhibition project.

Alexandra Meyer, *1984 in Winterthur, lives and works in Basel.

Sarah Rechberger (AT)

A-Symbiose, 2012/2013

In Sarah Rechberger's works her artistic interests are infused with an investigative spirit. For her project *A-Symbiose* (2012/2013) she created an in vitro biotope for the manual cultivation of orchids based on the procedure for the industrial mass production of these plants, which illustrates the interplay between symbiotic and parasitic systems. For industrial orchid cultivation to succeed, an artificial habitat has to be created where the plants are isolated and protected from environmental influences like bacteria or mould. After human intervention, the orchids – which only grow in a symbiosis with mycorrhizal fungi in nature – suddenly exist in "a-symbiosis", a fundamental change of relations. Once airborne mould spores enter this artificial habitat, they deplete the resources of the substrate and dominate the habitat forever. Sarah Rechberger, *1983 in Vienna, lives and works in Vienna.

Katharina Swoboda (AT)

Vampiric infection, 2018

Katharina Swoboda's works are executed in diverse media and tell of the actors who reside in the overlaps between the realms of nature and culture. The departure point for the multimedia installation *Vampiric infection* (2018) was her field research at historical "vampire graves" in Bulgaria and the ancient custom to pin down the bodies of the undead to their graves with heavy objects to keep them away from the living. Swoboda reflects upon this custom with a gilded skull – modelled after the artist's head – with a brick inserted in the jaw. The corresponding video work narratively connects the figure of the vampire with that of the female vamp. The artist also

explores the figure of the female vampire in terms of her emancipatory potential: As an imaginary creature, neither human nor animal, it transcends the prevailing categories of social order. The figure's appropriation and commercialisation by pop culture is highlighted with the golden colour of the skull.

Katharina Swoboda, *1984 in Graz, lives and works in Vienna.

Anne Cathrin Ulikowski (DE)

What are you going to do when you're not saving the world, 2013

The series of drawings *What are you going to do when you're not saving the world* (2013) is exemplary for Anne Cathrin Ulikowski's deep interest in female figures and characters from literature, film, and popular culture. Her images seem like fragments of individual scenes, which are charged with sublimated loneliness and eroticism. Close-ups of hands and legs, details such as long pointed fingernails refer to strategies of seduction as we know them from the media. Another narrative is generated by the attributes of the vampire figures in Ulikowski's drawings. Liquids such as alcohol, gasoline, and soft drinks are "fuels" of our consumer society, whose thirst can never be satisfied.

Anne Cathrin Ulikowski, *1980 in Hamburg, lives and works in Frankfurt am Main.

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Image material: www.kunstraum.net/en/press

Opening hours: Tuesday–Friday, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm, and Saturday 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Free entrance