

PAULA MUHR

Paula Muhr, 1977 in Subotica, Serbien, geboren, lebt und arbeitet als freie Fotografin in Berlin, Deutschland. → Sie erhielt ihren Master of Arts an der Kunsthochschule Belgrad, und studierte Literatur an der Philologischen Fakultät in Belgrad, Serbien. 2009 absolvierte sie ein Studienprogramm für höhere Semester an der Akademie für visuelle Kunst in Leipzig, Deutschland. → Ihre jüngsten Einzelausstellungen waren Highest Common Factor im Centre national de l'audiovisuel in Luxemburg (2009), Etat normal in der Delikatessenhaus Galerie in Leipzig (2009) und Golden Boys im Kunstverein Leipzig (2008). Ihre Arbeiten fanden Eingang in eine Reihe von Gruppenausstellungen. Unter anderem erhielt sie den ersten Preis des internationalen Foto-Wettbewerbs <Trust me> innerhalb der F/Stop, des ersten internationalen der Fotofestivals in Leipzig, Deutschland, und die Mangelos Produktionsförderung.

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OTHER

Abstract

Für meine Arbeit verwende ich hauptsächlich das Medium der Fotografie, als einem Mittel zur Erforschung sozio-kultureller Mechanismen und Strategien der Konstruktion von Sexualität, Gender, Sehnsucht und Normalität. → Vor allem bin ich interessiert an der historischen und der gegenwärtigen Rolle der Fotografie und anderer <Linsen-basierender> Medien in der Konstruktion von Wissen und in der Schaffung von sozialen Normen, zu akzeptablem, oder wünschenswertem Erscheinungsbild und Verhalten. → Das Konzept der Identität ist ein in meiner Arbeit immer wieder kehrendes Thema: Wie wird Identität konstruiert? Welche sozialen Mechanismen wirken in diesem Prozess? Wie einflussreich sind soziale Normen bei der Verfestigung der Kraft von Bildern im einzelnen Menschen? Welche taxonomischen Strategien und ideologischen Untermauerungen der gegenständlichen Systeme von, zum Beispiel, Literatur, Kunst, Werbung, Wissenschaft und Medizin sind hier am Wirken? → Ich verwende Forschungsmethoden und installiere gestellte Fotografie zusammen mit gefundenen Materialien, Texten, Zitaten und Geräuschen. Was die filmischen Fundstücke betrifft, so versuche ich eine semantische Verschiebung zu bewirken, und die Autorität des ursprünglichen Zusammenhangs zu destabilisieren.

THE

PAULA MUHR

Paula Muhr, born 1977 in Subotica, Serbia, is a freelance artist based in Berlin, Germany. → Her work explores cultural strategies in the construction of gender, sexuality and normality using different kind of media playing with established functions of Documentary-, Fashion-, Boulevard- and Snapshotphotography. → Paula Muhr holds an MA in Photography from the University Arts in Belgrade and studied General Literature at the Philological Faculty in Belgrade, Serbia. In 2009 she completed a graduate programme at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, Germany. Her recent solo shows include Highest Common Factor in Centre national de l'audiovisuel in Luxembourg (2009), Etat normal in Delikatessenhaus Galerie in Leipzig (2009) and Golden Boys in Kunstverein Leipzig (2008). Her work also has been included in numerous group exhibition. She was, among others, awarded the 1st prize at the international competition ›Trust me‹ within the F/Stop, 1st International Photography in Leipzig, Germany in 2007 and Mangelos Production Grant in 2009.

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Abstract

My work employs predominantly the medium of photography as a means of exploring socio-cultural mechanisms and strategies of constructing sexuality, gender, desire and normality. → I am especially interested in the historical and present mediation of photography and other lens-based media in the construction of knowledge and in the creation of social norms of acceptable and desirable appearance and behaviour. → The concept of identity is a recurring theme in my work. How is identity constructed? What social mechanisms are effective in this process? What is the role of visual media such as photography? How influential are social norms in establishing the power of images on the individual? What are taxonomic strategies and ideological underpinnings of representational systems of e.g. literature, art, commercials, science, and medicine? → I use research methods and I install staged photography with found materials, texts, speech and sounds. Concerning found footage, I aim to create a semantic shift and destabilise the authority of the original contexts of the material. → In ›Tito-Tata‹ images of the Yugoslav president Tito are installed with snapshots of my father. I thereby disclose underlying stereotypes governing the convention of representing the dominant male figures in communism. → My most recent works question historical scientific and social practices reflected in films, medical portrait photography and written material of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These historical representations are at the roots of our present-day practices of mapping and controlling the body in terms of knowledge and regulatory mechanism. My work thematises their influence on the contemporary gender discourses. → ›Etat normal‹ analyses cultural and ideological conditions of the construction of self-image. By referencing the physiognomic studies from 18th and 19th century, the early history of photography and Charcot's discovery of hysteria, I analyse the scientific and historical context pertinent to my own image production. → In ›Females Under Tension‹ and related works I examine the validity of (pseudo) scientific and medical practices aimed at defining normality. The work reinterprets the book entitled ›Abnormal Woman‹ from 1895 by certain Arthur McDonald, and medical images of female patients, predominantly ›hysterics‹. These images served as ›objective‹ illustration of their pathology. By recontextualising and deconstructing these documents, I facilitating a shift in their meaning. Thereby, I question the production of knowledge and the structure of power in discourses on mental health and normality.