

Hans Ulrich Obrist and Simon Castets interview young artist PHILIPP TIMISCHL



IN 1989 TIM BERNERS-LEE FIRST OUTLINED HIS IDEA FOR WHAT WOULD SOON BECOME THE WORLD WIDE WEB. THE FUTURA 89+ SERIES FEATURES INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS, WRITERS, ACTIVISTS, ARCHITECTS, FILMMAKERS, SCIENTISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS WHO WERE BORN IN OR AFTER 1989 AND BELONG TO A GENERATION, NOW REPRESENTING HALF OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, THAT HAS NEVER EXPERIENCED A WORLD BEFORE THE INTERNET.

Let's talk about the project you're working on as part of your 89plus residency at the Google Cultural Institute in Paris. The project will be presented at your first institutional solo exhibition at Künstlerhaus Graz as an ephemeral installation. The show has a very interesting title—can you tell us about its meaning?

My friend said this recently when he told me about a threesome experience he had with a couple: "They were treat-



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ing me like an object. As if I were some sex toy or shit. I don't wanna see them again." I am currently collecting sentences that I could imagine my artworks would say if they were real people for a book I am making that will be published on the occasion of the show. I transform documentation photography into these talking heads that speak about themselves. My friend does the 3D modeled heads and we use my pictures as a texture, which is their skin to depict their character. Below the heads there are printed quotes. Most of them are a bit whiny or depressed—the heads try to justify themselves or are just funny. I think all this started with my show in Vienna that I mentioned before. Back then the exhibition apologized to me for only being really good looking but having nothing to say. This show now will have a more annoyed vibe to it.

You've been working a lot with video stills as sculptural objects in your recent work, and this project will include large banners depicting video stills. How do you perceive the physicality of video? What drives you to translate these time-based digital works into a static physical form?

Philipp Timischl (Austrian, b. 1989) lives and works in Wien. He is represented by Vilma Gold, London; Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt; and Emanuel Layr, Wien.

Yes the banners in this exhibition will show video stills of a project I recently filmed. I tried to do a sort of behind the scenes / making of a porn movie. It's me having fun with this guy I like, a third person filming it and then a fourth person will edit the footage. I don't really know what to do with it yet or how to present it in the "right" way. I don't want it to be shocking or about porn. It's certainly much more explicit and less vague than what I did in the past. Showing stills from it allows me to just hint at something that might be finalized in the future. I am not trying to stretch the boundaries of what video or technical products can do. I use consumer products. I just order the screens and use whatever they come with. I also buy all my art supplies at a common art supply store. I like the

limitations of it. My friend called me illiterate the other day because I have no idea about programming languages. He was right, I think. It's the future and it seems limitless. But I can't work within that.

Tell us about your artist-run-space HHDM (which operated from April 2012 to March 2014). What inspired you to start it? What is the significance of an artist-run-space for you?

There are a lot of artist-run spaces in Vienna, but they mostly focus on the Viennese scene. It all felt a bit redundant so we decided to found HHDM and invite people from outside. It's simple as that. We closed the actual space now but sometimes get invited to do projects that happen mostly outside Vienna. So whenever that happens now we try to show people that have a strong connection to Vienna.

You've made photographic vinyl-prints that are installed on the walls and on the floor. At first sight they appeared to be extensions of the actual architectural space, but were in fact scenes from your previous exhibition spaces and some cityscapes. Can you tell us about the significance of these optical illusions and representations?

These anamorphic banners I produced for the show only function from one specific viewpoint in the space and come to full effect when viewed through a screen like your phone for example. I liked the idea of forcing the audience to look at the show from one specific viewpoint and therefore also see the sculptures from the angles I decided on. A lot of people just stand in front of my sculptures as if they were paintings but sometimes it's important to walk around and realize there are also elements on the backside. On the other hand, I also found it funny to start working on an exhibition by thinking about the documentation photography first, as it usually happens last. To create these anamorphic illusions you have to decide from which point in the space you want to photograph your documentation lat-

Left:
"12346, not 5,"
2013, exhibition
view at Neue
Alte Brücke,
Frankfurt

Below:
Untitled (Two Parks), 2014
Courtesy of the
artist and Vilma
Gold, London

REGULARS

er and model the arches accordingly to that. One of them also failed because I didn't realize there was an actual wall where the photographer was supposed to stand.

You don't appear to be publicly active on social networks. How would you describe your relationship to online socialization and do you see it playing a part in your work?

I use consumer products.
I just order the screens and use whatever they come with.

I am on my phone pretty much 24/7 but it's true, I don't post much. I recently deleted my whole Facebook timeline because I just couldn't relate to anything I posted anymore. It seemed like from a different person, and maybe it was. I think I am more of a Snapchat person. In that sense I wouldn't say social media plays a big part in my work—the things I film are more like a really boring Instagram feed. Thinking about it now, I would say my art is a Snapchat I think about for weeks before sending.

What is the meaning of books to you as a visual artist? What kind of books do you read? Do you ever make your own books?

89plus is a long-term, international, multi-platform research project co-founded by Simon Castets and Hans Ulrich Obrist, investigating the generation of innovators born in or after 1989 through conferences, books, periodicals, residencies and exhibitions. 89plus.com

I don't own a lot of books. I don't like owning stuff in general and books are the worst when it comes to moving flats, which I somehow end up doing every six months or so. I am, however, working on a book right now. It's the publication I'm making for the show in at the Künstlerhaus in Graz and it will have the same title as the show. It's like giving my previous artworks or exhibitions another voice.



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that none of the rides are documented communicates more than putting snippets of it online. Every ride was different after all. I feel that putting one example or ride online would just make people focus on a subsidiary aspect of it.

What was your epiphany? How did art come to you or how did you come to art?

I just stumbled into it. The Austrian school system makes kids decide really early to go in sometimes very specific directions. I liked drawing so

my teacher always pushed me in this direction. I moved to Vienna when I was sixteen and my much older flatmates all did the entrance exam at the Academy there. That's why I ended up studying at the age of seventeen. Often I think it's weird that I never had any interests outside of this. I recently talked with a friend about this routine of doing gallery shows, group shows, art fairs and so on. I mean I have only doing this for barely two years but the thought of doing this for so many more years can seem really strange and tiring in a way. I just hope it stays as much fun as it is now.

What kind of music do you mostly listen to?

I have been listening to How to Dress Well for about five years now constantly. I am not very interested in music

I have been listening to How to Dress Well for about five years now constantly.

What have you made that we can't find online?

When it comes to art, I don't think there is much that you can't find. Of course I made some conscious decisions about not putting certain things online. My videos for example would be more misleading than revealing when watched on their own. They are not works for themselves—I am not a video artist. I just use video in some of my work. Also there are some one-night-only events that are deliberately not documented. If I take the performance at the Serpentine Marathon as an example: the essence is that I showed a private holiday video during a cab ride with strangers while I talked to them about it. There's nothing more to say about it. The fact

This page:
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and just listen to what friends give me or more rarely just what the internet suggests to me.

What kind of music do you play when you are DJ-ing?

Female pop superstars. Stuff you hear in every gay bar. I wouldn't call it DJ-ing, though. I take over the stereo at house parties and play my Spotify "GAY" playlist.

Where does your catalogue raisonné start? What is the first piece you no longer considered student work?

I think that would be a work I showed at the annual exhibition at the Academy in Vienna. By definition it was still a student work, I guess. It was basically a text painting, saying "This is supposed to be the answer to the problem I just made up." I kind of liked that sentence but the work as a whole seemed lame—as in you could write that in neon and see it at an art fair kind of lame. Also the sentence was taken from some song text, I think. It was just too random in a lot of aspects. In the end I turned it 90° and projected the intro of the TV show "In Treatment" underneath. It was basically the setup I use for my sculptures now. My professor liked it and said she didn't know what it was or why, but that i should show it. ☺

Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen talk to cult Swiss designers TRIx AND ROBERT HAUSSMANN



THE PIONEERS SERIES SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON ARTISTS WHO HAVE CREATED TRULY INNOVATIVE WORK, TRAILBLAZERS WHOSE LEGACY LIVES AND REVERBERATES IN THE CURRENT GENERATION.

Manhattan,
1987

We discovered your work at a time when artists of our generation took a great deal of interest in postmodern design strategies. Members of the Memphis Group like Andrea Branzi and Ettore Sottsass, for example, were often quoted. And it was precisely at that time that we chanced upon your Da Capo Bar from the '80s, which struck us as an unusual building: the only radically postmodern project in Zurich. Our curiosity about this building, as well its relevance for contemporary art, prompted us to contact you about collaborating on a group show.

Trix Haussmann: Could you tell right away what the Da Capo Bar was about? Did this reference hit you immediately?

I think so. Funnily enough, it was in the air: almost at the same time that we discovered the bar at Zurich's main station, the Kunsthalle Zurich

PIONEERS

was holding a show by the young British artist Lucy McKenzie, who's known for her trompe l'oeil paintings. She showed some impressive marble trompe l'oeils that functioned like screens as spatial structures. This mannerist aesthetic somehow corresponded to the zeitgeist. Artist friends of ours like Emanuel Rossetti, Tobias Madison and Thomas Julian were showing works at Karma International Gallery at the same time that formally quoted Memphis.

Robert Haussmann: Then you figured there must be people in Zurich who were already working along those lines before Memphis...

