

Defying the ascendancy of digital images today, Annette Kelm has remained faithful to her medium: analogue photography. Although the range of motifs she has chosen to depict over the years is distinctly heterogeneous, she has developed a singular visual idiom that has as much to do with her subjects as with a probing exploration of the photographic medium itself.

Kelm's still lifes show gathered objects that are perfectly ordinary and yet, in the photographic image, wear a strangely standoffish, even alien expression. Similarly, her perspective on carefully arranged historical artefacts is cool and impersonal. What she shows us becomes fraught with meanings that attach less to things in themselves than to their assortment or our knowledge about them. Everything we see appears to be a signifier, however one that refuses to be specifically articulated. The transposition of sets of objects, architectures, and the portraits of artist friends into the two-dimensional space of photography reads as an act of abstraction, one in which something vanishes from view and resurfaces elsewhere as a distinctly unexpected visual surplus.

Annette Kelm's exhibition at Kunsthalle Wien puts the focus on works in which the rendition of design or a constellation of ostensibly familiar objects is subject to a subtle effect of defamiliarization. The Versuchsanstalt für Wasserbau und Schiffsbau [Research Institute for Hydraulic Engineering and Shipbuilding] in Berlin, is an iconic building that houses facilities for experiments in fluid mechanics. It appears in her photograph as an abstract architectonic volume of colour. In her series *Friendly Tournament*, the shooting targets, pitted with holes and small craters where they were struck by darts, recall Lucio Fontana's perforated canvases and offer an analysis of the interrelation between figure and ground, between three-dimensional reality and its representation, that is both intellectually astute and laconic.

In these and many other works, Kelm's visual creations evince a fascinating paradox: the signifiers and motifs are perfectly legible, but what they mean to tell us is often deliberately left obscure. There are traces we can pursue, references we can decode, but in the end it is the exacting photographic gaze on things that prompts us to reflect on reality and the potentials of its representation.

Nicolaus Schafhausen, curator

The Jacquard loom at the Deutsches Museum in Munich is an imposing exhibit. Invented in the late eighteenth century. the device - which simplifies the weaving of patterned textiles - is an emblem of mechanization and the associated displacement of human labour, but it's use of punched cards is also regarded as a precursor of binary programming and thus a predecessor of modern computing technology. Still, the history bound up with the loom is not readily recognizable in the object as it presents itself to the eye. Annette Kelm's photograph instead brings out the almost architectonic quality of its geometric construction, heightened by its presentation before a white backdrop and the abstract lines of a display system set up next to it. Jacquard Loom Deutsches Museum Munich (2016) does not prompt the viewer to draw on her or his knowledge of cultural history, but it demonstrates that things always carry meanings that are not easily rendered in pictures; that, in being depicted, they are always also signifiers pointing toward something that lies beyond them.

Most of Kelm's photographs show unassuming yet oddly fractious motifs that quote the genres of still life, studio or architectural photography, without ever fully complying with the conventions governing these genres. In fact, they seem deliberately designed to defy the customary functions of photography as a medium either of documentation or staged representation. Often captured in frontal views and in great detail, combining a minimalist air with visual opulence, her still lifes underscore their translation into the two-dimensional space of photography. Impersonal photographs of museum pieces mask the historical context only to bring it back in on an external level. Portraits of artist friends hew to the principle of the series, which shifts the focus away from the person herself or himself, and toward minute variations of gesture, expression and setting.

Annette Kelm mostly works with large- and medium-format cameras. She prints her pictures by hand. Like product photographers in advertising, she avoids shadows in favour of a clinical rendition. Her conceptual approach, the exceptional sharpness of her images, and the neutral

lighting lend the objects she depicts a peculiar salience. The emphasis on the factual precludes any explicit form of symbolism, while the cultural or ideological dimensions of her tropes are unmistakable. Yet this focus on formal criteria is destabilized by the selective insertion of props that bear no manifest relation to the picture's central subject. Her pictures of furniture, patterned fabrics, artfully staged plastic products, or rebuslike arrangements of diverse items generate what may be described as an excess of signification that is hard to put into words.

On the one hand, these works, which are entirely devoid of narrative elements. strike the eve as being on the whole somewhat hermetic. On the other hand, they insistently point toward something outside them that might supplement their existence as representations of reality. The subject of depiction in Kelm's art goes hand in hand with photography's problematic iconic dimensions. What types of residues, displacements, and semantic linkages does the process of photographic transfer bring forth? Kelm's series, in particular, in which she patiently examines an object placed before a neutral backdrop, bring references to history, aesthetics, or media culture into play that accentuate her interest in an individually legible cultural history of things.

Still Life with Spring (2017) shows peonies in a 1950s-style vase on a black Ikea folding table. Sheets of blue paper taped to the white wall behind it and a vaquely technical-looking white object with projecting metal rods add to the impression of a composition of disparate objects. Yet the overall impression is one of exceptional harmony, reflecting a diffuse post-war aesthetic that is identifiable in the palette and geometric abstraction of the formal vocabulary. It brings historic interior designs to mind, but also the artificiality and overtly constructed quality of the work of, say, Horst P. Horst or Louise Dahl-Wolfe, whose photographs appeared in the pages of American Vogue and Harper's Bazaar.

Still lifes interest Kelm because – in a sense – they freeze time twice over. Photography as such is a time-bound medium, predicated on the instant of exposure. The still life, moreover, stops assorted everyday items in their tracks as it were, abruptly removing them from

circulation as commodities and stripping them of their practical utility. Objects that have become nothing but images, transmuted once again into pictures.

500 Euro (2018) shows an obviously counterfeit 500-euro bill in front of a backdrop decorated with an Op-art pattern. The banknote presents itself in the photographic reproduction as printed paper that, in this instance, has at best abstract monetary value - just as printed money more generally is the result of a symbolically regulated and socially practiced convention. The backdrop pattern with its simulation of depth and volume likewise plays with the principle of illusion. In Proposal for Knots (2018) and Piano Lesson (2018), by contrast. handpicked flowers appear before busy but flat backgrounds that make them stand out especially vividly. The arrangement does not seek to lend the motifs an air of nobility. but it also does not let the reality of things slip away in favour of some distant and novel purport. Instead, the juxtaposition draws attention to forms of product staging that, in a different constellation of objects. would feel almost conventional but here yield surprising effects.

Other works, meanwhile, purposely focus on objects fraught with significance. Photographs of a pair of dungarees (Latzhose 1. "Relaxed": Latzhose 2. "Standard"; Latzhose 3, "Kicking Leg"; Latzhose 4, "Jump", 2014) subject the piece of apparel to scrutiny, an investigation that poses a fruitful challenge to the relation between seeing and knowing. To what extent has a narrative of cultural history put its stamp on the pants? In which way does the photographic gaze activate this narrative? The works couple Kelm's rigorously formal approach with an almost playful theatrical strategy that seems to set the garment in motion and virtually animates it. The dungarees belong to the mother of an artist friend and are seen lying on the studio floor, Formerly a typical piece of men's workwear, dungarees, now dyed purple - blending the stereotypically masculine original blue with red, a colour coded as feminine – were adopted as a symbol by the feminist movement of the 1970s. Each picture in the series is different. yet the variations do not alter the garment's signification. Still, they mark a distinction

that complicates the idea of a singular and authoritative visual representation, just as different people have different perspectives on feminism.

In her essay film Mitten im Malestream (2005) [In the middle of the male stream]. the German director Helke Sander revisits vintage documentary footage to discuss the history of the women's movement. Among the featured objects is a display case at the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, a historical museum in Bonn: the exhibits – a pair of the purple dungarees of the sort that West German feminists during the 1970s liked to wear, plus several magazines and records - encapsulate German second-wave feminism. Kelm visited several history museums and more than once encountered similar assemblages. Her photographs pinpoint the constructed quality of such presentations, telling examples of how small selections of objects are used to write history and become stand-ins for complex situations and developments (Vitrine zur Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung in Baden-Württemberg, Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, [Vitrine on the history of the women's movement in Baden-Württemberg, House of History Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart], 2013; Vitrine zur Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, [Vitrine on the history of the women's movement in the Federal Republic of Germany, German History Museum, Berlin] 2013).

These works examine textiles steeped in a specific history, as does the Big Print series, which shows sumptuously patterned decorative fabrics created by the influential American interior designer Dorothy Draper. Having launched her own business in 1923, Draper designed widely imitated interiors for American homes, hotels, restaurants, theatrical venues, and department stores. Dubbed "Modern Baroque", her style combines different colours, fabrics, and patterns in a dramatic mise-en-scène that is the stark opposite of a minimalist approach. Kelm's Big Print showcases characteristic samples from Draper's work in textile design, each labelled with its own name and the year it was created. In the one-to-one reproductions, the pictorial space converges with the object shown:

the flatness of the fabric coincides with the two-dimensional nature of its photographic rendition - an unmistakable reference to the anti-illusionism of modernist painting. which similarly identifies the picture with its surface, underscoring the medium as such, which is to say - the physical support and the fixed pictorial composition. Yet Draper's opulent patterns, for their part, are composites, ornamental abstractions derived from floral and plant motifs. Kelm's selection moreover includes patterns that were regarded as "exotic" when they first came out, laying additional referential trails that lead into American post-war modernism and its universalist ideology (Big Print #1 [Lahala Tweed - Cotton Chevron Fall 1949 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Col, 2007; Big Print #6 [Jungle Leaves - Cotton Twill 1947 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Col, 2007).

A triple portrait of Julian Göthe (Julian. Italian Restaurant, 2008) in which the artist, dressed in a black T-shirt, appears before a white wall at a table with a loudly colourful tablecloth is both a formal composition and a study of closeness and distance, picture and depiction, space and time. Friendly Tournament (2006), a four-part series of pictures of a shooting target - mounted on a black and similarly hole-riddled wall - is reminiscent of Lucio Fontana's concetti spaziali [spatial concepts]: whereby the artist slashed monochrome canvases and declared the resulting works to be sculptural objects. Based on the principle of repetition and variation, the pictures once again turn the spotlight on photography itself as a production of signifiers and images. In particular, the series proves a viable escape from a conception of pictures stuck on representation. Annette Kelm's serialist strategy rests on lightly modified reiterations that underscore the essence of photography as a succession of distinct moments in time.

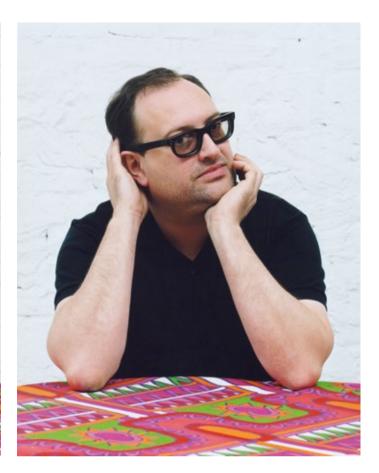


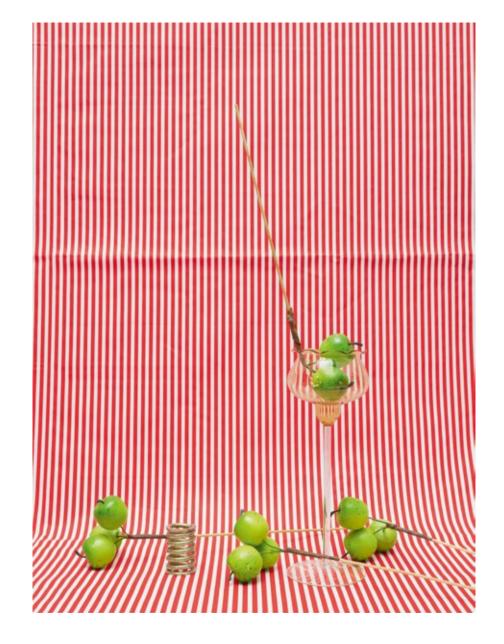


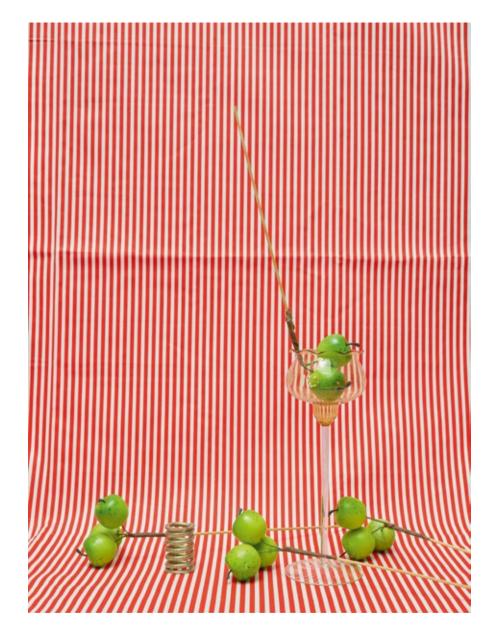












Apples, 2018





Ludwig Stiftung Aachen, Basement 2018, 2018

Untitled (Rider), 2005











Annette Kelm (b. Stuttgart, 1975) is an artist and photographer. In 2018. Kelm's work was the subject of exhibitions at the Peter und Irene Ludwig Stiftung, Aachen; the Fosun Foundation, Shanghai; Gió Marconi, Milan: and the Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, Past solo exhibitions of Kelm's work include: Leaves. Kestnergesellschaft. Hannover, 2017: Affinities. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. 2016: Dust. Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2014; and Annette Kelm Kunsthalle Zürich. 2009. KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2009. CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2008, and Witte de With. Rotterdam. 2008. Kelm contributed work to New Photography at the Museum of Modern Art. New York, in 2013 and to ILLUMInations. 54th Venice Biennale, 2011. In 2015 Kelm received the Camera Austria -Award for contemporary photography, Graz.

List of Works

Turning into a Parrot, 2003 C-Print, 50 x 40 cm

Backstage, 2004 C-Prints, 4 parts, each 13 x 18 cm

Untitled (Egg), 2004 C-Print, 37 x 46 cm

Untitled (Rider), 2005 C-Print, 80 x 100 cm

Friendly Tournament, 2006 C-Prints, 4 parts, each 55 x 55 cm Reading a Book about Robert Stacy-Judd, 2006 C-Print, 80 x 100 cm

Big Print #1 (Lahala Tweed – Cotton Chevron Fall 1949 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Co), 2007 C-Print, 130,5 x 100.5 cm Sammlung Albrecht Kastein. Berlin

Big Print #2 (Maui Fern – Cotton "Mainsail Cloth" Fall 1949 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Co), 2007 C-Print, 131.5 x 100.5 cm Sammlung Hennecke, Berlin

Big Print #3 (Ventana Florida – Cotton Texture Fall 1949 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Co), 2007 C-Print, 115 x 100.5 cm

Big Print #4 (Fazenda Lily – White Background – Cotton Fall 1947 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Co), 2007 C-Print, 112 x 100.5 cm

Big Print #5 (Fazenda Lily – Gray Background – Cotton Fall 1947 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Co), 2007 C-Print, 112 x 100.5 cm

Big Print #6 (Jungle Leaves – Cotton Twill 1947 Design Dorothy Draper, Courtesy Schumacher & Co), 2007 C-Print, 131.5 x 100.5 cm Private Collection, Berlin

First Picture for a Show, 2007 C-Print, 16 x 20 cm

Untitled (Organ), 2007 C-Print, 100.5 x 83 Kemmler Collection, Germany Untitled (Portraits), 2007 C-Prints, 6 parts, each 43 x 37 cm The SAMMLUNG VERBUND Collection, Vienna

Julian, Italian Restaurant, 2008 C-Prints, 3 parts, 44 x 37 cm

Michaela Coffee Break, 2009 C-Prints, 6 parts, each 43 x 32 cm

Untitled (Boats), 2009 C-Print, mounted on Aludibond, 61 x 91.8 cm Private Collection

Art Car #2, 2010 C-Print, 65.6 x 81.2 cm

Percent for Art, 2013 C-Prints, 6 parts, each 70 x 50 cm

J'aime Paris, 2013 C-Prints, 3 parts, each 76.5 x 60.5 cm

Vitrine zur Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in Baden-Württemberg, Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, 2013 C-Print, 78 x 62.5 cm

Vitrine zur Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, 2013 C-Print, 78.7 x 60.8 cm

Judith, old Masters, 2014 C-Print, 66.5 x 53.5 x 4 cm

Latzhose 1, "Relaxed", 2014 C-Print, 65 x 79.5 cm

Latzhose 2, "Standard", 2014 C-Print, 65 x 79.5 cm Latzhose 3, "Kicking leg", 2014 C-Print, 63 x 77.5 cm

Latzhose 4, "Jump", 2014 C-Print, 63 x 77.5 cm

Jacquard Loom Deutsches Museum Munich, 2016 C-Print, 115 x 95 cm

Set Square and Flowers, 2016 C-Print, 65 x 95 cm

Stuttgart 4 / Stars with Ladder, 2016 C-Print, 100 x 80 cm

Raddish, 2016 C-Print, 55.8 x 45 cm

Zuse 1, 2016 C-Print, 47.4 x 60.8 cm

Still Life with Spring, 2017 Archival Pigment Print, 120 x 90 cm

Apples, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, diptych, each 100 x 75 cm

Big Sur, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 90 x 67 cm

Feder und Knallerbsen, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 75.7 x 56.8 cm

Good Morning, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 75 x 56 cm

Light Double, 2018 Archival Pigment Prints, 2 parts, each 51.9 x 39.4 cm

Ludwig Stiftung Aachen, Basement 2018, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 120 x 90 cm Mini Easel Relief, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 84 x 63 cm

Piano Lesson, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 120.7 x 90.5 cm

Proposal for Knots, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 75 cm

Tomato Target, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 120.7 x 90.5 cm Private Collection, Germany

Versuchsanstalt für Wasserbau und Schiffbau, Berlin, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 100 x 79 cm

500 Euro, 2018 Archival Pigment Print, 75 x 56 cm

If not stated differently all works courtesy of Annette Kelm and KÖNIG GALERIE; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Gió Marconi, Milano; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Galerie Mayer Kainer, Vienna; Herald St., London

Program

Opening Thu 13/12 2018, 7 pm

Thu 13/12 2018, 7 pm In presence of Annette Kelm

Performance & Music Acts

Thu 13/12 2018, 8 pm Live-Set by Steven Warwick, Berlin

Fri 18/1 2019, 7 pm

Unangenehme Gefühle
2, "Lügen" (Unpleasant
Feelings 2, "Lies")
Conversation Piece
organisied by Sonja
Cvitkovic and Megan
Francis Sullivan

Wed 27/2 2019, 7 pm

Antifaschistische
Schlager und Chansons
(Anti-fascist hits and chansons) Concert with
Michaela Meise

Tours

All tours are free with admission!

Curator's Tour

The curator of the exhibition, Nicolaus Schafhausen, discusses topics addressed by the presented works and elaborates on their background.

Wed 20/2 2019, 6 pm With Nicolaus Schafhausen

Sunday Tours

Every Sunday at 4 pm you can join our art educators on a guided tour to explore the exhibition. The tours focus on the presentation and different aspects of the works of Annette Kelm (Guided tours in German).

With: Wolfgang Brunner, Carola Fuchs, Michaela Schmidlechner and Michael Simku

Sun 16/12 2018, 6/1, 20/1, 24/3 2019, 4 pm **The Urgency of the Casual**

Sun 23/12 2018, 10/3, 17/3 2019, 4 pm Between Reality and Reproduction

Sun 30/12 2018, 13/1, 3/2, 24/2 2019, 4 pm **The Mystery of Things**

Sun 27/1, 10/2, 17/2, 3/3 2019, 4 pm Staged World of Objects

Foto Wien. Month of Photography

Fri 22/3 2019, 6 pm *My View with Julia Gaisbacher* In her works artist Julia Gaisbacher deals with the complex relationships between social conventions in public space, architecture and representation.

Together with art educator Wolfgang Brunner, she will present her personal view on the exhibition.

In the series My View, we invite experts, amateurs and people of interest to present their personal perspectives on the exhibition.

Sat 23/3 2019, 11 am–12:30 pm Out of the Ordinary Children's Workshop, for kids from 6–10 years. (See * for more details)

Sun 24/3 2019, 4 pm The Urgency of the Casual Guided Tour Children's Workshop Sat 19/1 & Sat 23/3 2019, 11 am–12:30 pm Out of the Ordinary

Out of the Ordinary

* We invent a new image
of ourselves. We dress
up, style, and alienate
ourselves, until we are
someone completely
different! Camera, mobile
phone, cool light and lots
of material to transform will
help us. Once the posing
and shooting is done,
we'll print out your photos
and build a special frame
for your doppelganger!

For Kids from 6 – 10 years In cooperation with WienXtra Children: 2 EUR / with wienXtra-Kinderaktivcard free of charge Adults: 4 EUR / with wienXtra-Kinderaktivcard 2 EUR

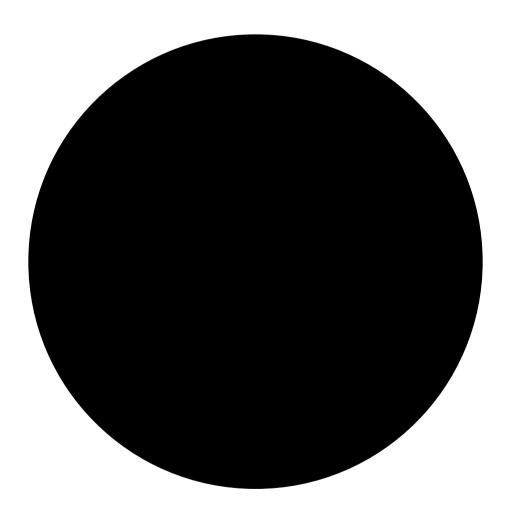
Registration: vermittlung@kunsthallewien.at

Special Program in cooperation with MUK Vienna

Tue 5/3 2019, 6 pm *Die dritte Dimension der Bilder* (*The Third Dimension of Images*) As a final project of her Master of Arts Education studies at MUK Vienna, Marija Andjic and collaborating artists develop an interdisciplinary presentation that opens up an unconventional perspective on the exhibition.

With: Marija Andjic, Matti Felber, Donya Salehijozani, Daniel Schneider, Zobaydollah Rahimi, Keivan Valadan

Auslöser



Fotografie im Portrait

Ausgabe 1 — März 2019

www.ausloeser.org

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ExhibitionKunsthalle Wien GmbH

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MAGAZIN FÜR KUNST UND LEBEN
DER STANDARD



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