

Jonas Lipps  
Kitty Kraus

29 April – 28 May 2016  
Private view: Thu, 28 April, 6 – 8 pm  
Opening hours: Wed – Fri 11 am – 6 pm,  
Sat 11 am – 5 pm and by appointment

Here, once again, is an encounter of two artists who, one may be inclined to think, could not be more different. Yet, a notorious person once said collaboration is when you mull over art or attitudes or monkeys and butterflies; *that* you call collaboration.\* Much as the work of Jonas Lipps and Kitty Kraus appears to be different, and it really is, there exists an intersection, facilitated through a latent affinity, through something that does not necessarily reveal itself, but that makes itself felt when it is, as in this exhibition, conjured.

**Jonas Lipps's** drawings and watercolours are, almost without exception, in a small or very small format. In a spirit of colourful painterly exuberance or graphical grace, he gives expression to worlds that could be considered poetic, if only one could ignore their subject matter. Frisking, mischievous wolves in sheep's clothing. The observer is easily deceived by the charm of the medium, the cheeriness of the colours and the familiarity of the comic-like style. Lipps paints delightfully beautiful pictures featuring strange, absurd, indeed "ugly" motifs just as easily as he is capable of painting "ugly" pictures, small "bad paintings", but with spirit.

What emerges are improbable encounters between anthropomorphised animal shapes and caricatured human forms in a setting that we easily recognise as our own. Lipps's pictures are, however, not contorted representations of everyday life, but interpretations of a comprehensive visual culture of secondary order, as represented by the flood of professional advertising images and wealth of amateurish pictures on the internet, images that we feel relate to our reality. In his pictures, Jonas Lipps appropriates with equal finesse the stance of obtuse insidiousness of ad artisans, as well as the keen naiveté of those surrendering to temptation. An example of this is his Zarlando series, which clearly references the advertisements of a German online shop.

Prepared with immense subtlety and realised with virtuosity, the humorous flair of the pictures seems obvious, but Lipps subverts the jest, manipulates the anticipated witticism. He cultivates in his pictures a special kind of grotesque comedy that doubtless finds precedence in Wilhelm Busch or Sigmar Polke. In their work, as in that of Lipps, one finds a variety of odd mixes of styles and hierarchies, of the regulated and of the unconscious, of superiority and self-irony. The ornament or decorative pattern, which are presented as a foil to orderly beauty, and which disintegrate in Lipps's attractive visual oxymorons, contain an element that is unsettling.

**Kitty Kraus's** reduced sculptures and installations formulate hypotheses about the potentials of their own nature and being, which are put to the test using processes that are partly controlled, partly random.

Fragility, transitoriness or temporality, coincidence, probability and anticipation are not only after-effects of the reception of her works. One could almost say they are the "materials" that Kraus works with, given the way she often combines her fragile and simple constructions fashioned from fabric, glass, heat, light, ice and other materials and physical forces joined in simultaneous collaboration and collision.

Kraus's process-oriented approach to these vestigial yet substantial materials is not aimed at merely depicting causal events. The rejection or dissolution of a rigorous form, the induced and observed decay of the form, change and the changing are aspects of Kraus's work manifested not only visually, but also broadened as mental images.

Encased in an ice block of diluted ink, a shining light bulb slowly melting its receptacle; an exceedingly fragile construction consisting of two glass panes almost literally suspended in anticipation of possible occurrences and in consideration of the probabilities – these are, for Kraus, means of sublimation and the visualisation of an expanded understanding that encompasses the material manifestation as well as its essential nature.

These allusions to precariousness and to the fluid boundaries between what is and is not known result in an underlying sense of threat, which Kraus further escalates through alienation strategies, as witnessed in the works exhibited here, *Untitled* (2013) and *Untitled* (2016).

*Untitled* (2013) is an installation of four trolley handles sourced from a well-known supermarket chain. Mounted uniformly on the wall, the "Plus" bars rotate slowly and monotonously about their own axes. The enforced, repetitive rhythm of the movement and its sluggishness are suggestive of a latent threat, which is made manifest in *Untitled* (2016) only with the knowledge that, in a reversal of the natural order of things, the "functioning" of the light-emitting installation is really determined by the danger of an electric shock.

The articulation of the comic-grotesque in Jonas Lipps's drawings subliminally conveys a feeling of unease, which is also what one senses in the presence of Kitty Kraus's works: ... *the fearful looks from beauty itself as the compulsion which emanates from the form ...*\*\*.

\* Martin Kippenberger. In: "Stellen Sie sich vor, ein Mond scheint am Himmel. Gespräch mit Martin Kippenberger", ed. Starship (Hans-Christian Dany, Martin Ebner, Ariane Müller), Berlin, 2007, p. 40.

\*\* Theodor W. Adorno, "Ästhetische Theorie", ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt/Main, 2012, p. 83f.

Text: Mihaela Chiriac

**Jonas Lipps (\*1979) lives and works in Berlin. He attended the University of the Arts Berlin. His work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions at venues in Europe and overseas, including the Biennale of Young Artists, Bucharest, the Chelsea Art Museum, New York, Prague Biennial and Kunstverein Bremerhaven.**

**Kitty Kraus (\*1976) lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the University of the Arts Berlin (master class of Lothar Baumgarten). In 2008 Kraus was awarded the Art Prize of the Bundesverband der Deutschen Volksbanken und Raiffeisenbanken. She was a visiting professor at the Berlin Weissensee School of Art in 2009/2010. Nominated for the Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst Prize in 2011, Kitty Kraus has exhibited at venues including the Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin.**