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# TAGESSPIEGEL



Installation view, Frieze London, 2021

## Die Londoner Kunstmesse Frieze Mühsam normal mit stiff upper lip *Tagesspiegel*, Stefan Kobel, October 15, 2021

Der britische Kunsthandel versucht an Zeiten vor dem Brexit und der Pandemie anzuknüpfen. Doch Galeristen und Besucher halten sich zurück.

Der Kunstmarkt ist im Eimer. Wenn Banksys berühmtes Shredder-Bild „Love is in the Bin“ bei der Auktion von Sotheby's im Rahmen der Frieze-Woche seinen ohnehin schon absurden Schätzwert mal eben locker verdreifacht und für 16 Millionen Pfund (inklusive Aufgeld 18,6 Mio.) einem Telefonbieter zugeschlagen wird, sind dem Kunstmarkt offensichtlich Maß und Mitte verloren gegangen. Zumal sich zeitgleich in den beiden Zelten der Frieze London und der Frieze Masters alle Teilnehmer mit einer stiff upper lip Mühe geben, Normalität zu simulieren.

„Unworlding“ heißt die Losung, durch die Realität ins abgeschottete Messezelt kommen soll. Die Wortschöpfung umschreibt das Konzept des französischen Kurators Cédric Fauq, abgeleitet vom vieldeutigen Begriff „undoing“ der Welt, wie wir sie kennen. Undoing kann sowohl rückgängig- als auch zunichtemachen bedeuten. Fauqs Ausstellung mit zehn ausgewählten Positionen – pikanterweise platziert zwischen den VIP-Lounges – beschert der Frieze jene street credibility, die andere Messen im Top-Segment so oft vermissen lassen.

Nach London hat es auch Hua International aus Berlin und Peking geschafft, eine Galerie, die in ihrer jetzigen Form gerade einmal zwei Jahre existiert. Die Kojé bringt auf kleinster Fläche organische Skulpturen aus Glas mit Installationen und Elementen von Performances der französischen Künstlerin Fanny Gicquel (3.400 bis knapp 10.000 GBP) zusammen. Hua International setzt damit ein Zeichen, das die junge Galerie frühzeitig auf die Agenda der großen Messen bringen könnte.

Das andere Ende des schier endlos scheinenden Zeltes ist traditionell der jungen Kunst im „Focus“-Sektor vorbehalten. Hier setzen die Galerien eher auf Statements, wie Tanja Wagner aus Berlin, die mit ihrer Künstlerin Cathrin Hoffmann einen sensationellen Stand aus einem Guss gestaltet hat. Er verwischt die Grenzen zwischen Malerei und Skulptur, Illusion und Raum und verbindet sich zu einem fließenden und verstörenden Ganzen. Die einzelnen Arbeiten kosten zwischen 7.000 und 16.000 Euro.

<https://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/muhsam-normal-mit-stiff-upper-lip-6855214.html>

# ELEPHANT

## Frieze London 2021: Elephant's Must-See Artist Highlights

*Elephant*, Ravi Ghosh, October 14, 2021

These are the eight artists whose work caught our eye at this year's art extravaganza.



Installation view, Frieze London, 2021

### Cathrin Hoffmann

Hamburg-based Cathrin Hoffmann translates virtually modelled figures into challenging human forms in paint, posing questions around digital futures and imperfect corporealities. Her canvases show angular surrealist subjects whose bodies bear shades of a single, often metallic colour, while her sculptures, comprised of fibre concrete, silicon, steel and faux fur, show deconstructed and dehumanised forms which veer towards the mechanic.

Hoffmann's Galerie Tanja Wagner booth is encased in a blue wall painting, allowing her fleshy pink sculptures to hover in space, or in the case of *Supposed To Fight—That Was The Deal*, lie prone with an arm extended skywards. Nearby, similarly shaped limbs protrude from the floor, a constant conversation between the human and the object. (Ravi Ghosh)

<https://elephant.art/frieze-london-2021-elephants-must-see-artist-highlights-14102021/>



Studio view, Cathrin Hoffmann, 2021

## Explore the raw and complex work of Cathrin Hoffmann

*Art of Choice*, Christina Samper, March 5, 2021

Through a layered multimedia creative process, German artist Cathrin Hoffmann took the time to explain the origin behind her otherworldly creations. She delved into her past as a creator, whose comfort zone lies originally in graphic design. Despite having started “late” in the art world race, Hoffmann has continually made an impression on the viewer. She passes us through her universe of imperfection and graphic distortion to converse about beauty and other emotional cues. As spectators, we are placed in an entirely contrived universe of hot pink figures that through their bodily confidence will convey sentiments of love, beauty, sexuality and humanity, in infinitely layered variations. Read below to learn more about the artist, her upbringing, and her recent path as a professional artist.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. Where are you from and how did art first come into your life?

I'm originally from a small town in Northern Germany. I grew up in a family that wasn't very artistic upfront, but my mom and dad did have a shared passion for performance. Even before I was born, they would put plays together, making the costumes and stage design, and my mother taught belly dancing on the side. So there was definitely creative energy in the home, but it was always a sort of hobby to everyday life.



*I Agree With Your Look of Horrified Realization, 2020, Oil on Canvas, Courtesy of the Artist*

Has your work always taken on the style it currently embodies?

A lot of people have told me that through the characters I produce they feel a sense of the uncanny. The distorted and somehow fractured characters, I've always been drawn to that. Even as a child, I remember making up my own characters, and they were always the weird ones in the bunch. And I've always been drawn to figurative subjects, personalities, faces, or expressions.



*No, That's Not The First Part Of A Magic Trick, 2020, Oil on Canvas, Courtesy of the Artist*

**What is your process like? How do you begin a work?**

Now that I'm more comfortable with painting and holding the pen, I do drawings to start on my work. But I can't say that's how I started in the past. I wasn't able to touch the paper and pencil until recently. And now I'm getting in the habit of using both, depending on my needs, and whichever works better.

**From where do you draw inspiration?**

That's a tough one because I wouldn't declare inspiration, it's more about the things that awake something in me. I feel I absorb these real life moments, and it continues moving, I carry it around, and from that comes the artwork.

**Walk us through a day in the studio.**

Although I really like to work at night, I had to find a way to get myself a proper sleep schedule, because I started losing connection with my surroundings. I try to come to the studio in the morning, and I have a shared studio with another artist, and I'm here until late evening.

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Installation View, *It Still Smells of Nothing*, 2020, Courtesy of the Artist and Public Gallery

**Your work takes on multiple forms of medium. Do you have a favorite?**

Since I just started doing sculptures, I wanted to spend more and more time doing so. Although I'm always doing both, because sculptures come from the paintings, sculpture is definitely something I want to dive more in my upcoming work.

But I feel that I'm very drawn to whatever I haven't experimented with yet. I look forward to doing movies and film, also working with music, but for now I want to explore sculpting more.



What larger questions do you think your work asks?

What really helps me is speaking with others about my work. Many of my friends observe my work with me and ask me what my purpose is behind these uncanny figures. The answer is that I really don't see the characters as uncanny. What I want is to make viewers stop, and give them a break from the typical. I believe since those are the components that attract me to certain things. I don't think the subjects are uncanny. They're definitely dramatic, but not uncanny. I see it's easier for the viewer to be hit on the second level, if they feel like regressing in the first level. So once you've removed rationality from the rational viewer, it becomes much easier to converse through their emotion.

Does your work reference any Art Historical movements or figures?

I was always fascinated by Egon Schiele, Francis Bacon, and of course Louise Bourgeois. The homage I did in my London show was referred to a soft sculpture by Dorothea Tanning. So I feel those references were obviously influential in my work. I remember as a child seeing a painting in a book by Francis Bacon I believe it was. And I just felt completely moved by it. And I feel it's since been a feeling I look to convey in someone that experiences my work.



*This is Not Surreal!*, 2020, Oil on Canvas, Courtesy of the Artist

## What's next for you?

In terms of my work, I want to learn more about different crafts, especially veered towards my sculptures. As for upcoming shows:

- Tanja Wagner in March, 2021.
- Art Rotterdam with Amsterdam gallery Marian Cramer which I have mentioned is of course postponed to June, 2021.
- The group show with Berlin gallery König will open in March, 2021.
- A group show with London gallery Carl Kostyal will take place in April in their new space "The Hospitalet" in Stockholm during Art Week.

At the end of each interview we like to ask the artist to recommend a friend whose work you love and would like for us to interview next. Who would you suggest?

Hunter Potter, a dear friend and colleague

<https://www.artofchoice.co/explore-the-raw-and-complex-work-of-cathrin-hoffmann/>



## Cathrin Hoffmann: The Big Why

*Juxtapoz Magazine*, Sasha Bogojev, Spring Issue, 2021

It's always energizing to see resilient folks transform an indifferent experience into fuel that blazes a new path. Years of working in the advertising industry was like skating on the surface, pushing Cathrin Hoffman into a passion for making work that speaks about the human experience. Through imagery and sculptural work depicting the sting and heat of being human, she delves into questions similar to those the European existentialist philosophers pondered over a hundred years ago. Blasting through an advanced digital age where reality and cyber existence keep shapeshifting, she creates rough 3D renderings of anthropomorphic shapes existing in desolate, void spaces. Stripped of identifying features, removed from objects that would suggest social status, they are portrayed with an emphasis of the questionable flaws we all carry. After years of photoshopping and perfecting models and consumer goods integral to her profession, Hoffmann decided to focus on telling the other, more complex, but certainly more emotional side of the human story.



*Overcoming Gravity*, Oil on canvas, 37" x 47", 2020



*I Stick My Finger In Existence*, Oil on canvas, 106" x 75", 2020

**Sasha Bogojev:** Describe your metamorphosis from digital to analog.

Cathrin Hoffmann: I was traveling with my boyfriend, and we were in Leon, Nicaragua, where we rented a room in a shared house, and there was an actual table and a chair in the room for the first time during our trip. I had brought with me my graphic tablet and started drawing digitally for the first time. It was such a feeling of freedom not to have a purpose, not to have a briefing by an agency or by a client, just to think about the three months we had already traveled and drawing what we experienced. That was the first time I did that for, like, 12 hours a day. My boyfriend was going to the beach, and I sat there, drank rum, and drew.

Did you jump to oil on canvas right after you got back home?

No, I was afraid of the paint and the brush. But I decided to be more physical, trying to not only sit in front of the computer. I wanted to try something with real materials, so I started doing collages as well. It's cutting out and gluing and then a little bit of paint. But most of the time, I drew. I drew with pastel chalks, and that was okay. I wasn't afraid of those [laughs]. I had some really nice paintings that I made digitally, and I thought that I really wanted to see them on a big scale. So I decided to paint them and sneak in the canvas

I guess a more standard trajectory is to learn techniques and develop what you want to paint alongside. Was it frustrating trying to manifest your finished digital work with a different technique?

Yeah, it was terrible. Starting out, I really thought I needed to have lessons, that I needed to go to school somehow because I wouldn't be able to learn otherwise. I realized painting is too hard. So I watched a lot of YouTube videos but that didn't help, and I had always wanted to do it correctly. Maybe that's the German part of me—I wanted to do it like a "real painter" would. I thought I had to hold my brush like Picasso. I couldn't do it, and I still can't [laughs]. But now I know—fuck that! Do it however you want to do it. And this is where I come back to the first thing I said—I'm happy that I didn't have lessons because I think someone else would try to push me in a direction I would not go myself. And so I learned my own way, and I'm really happy that I learned it on my own and maybe have a different look than an educated painter. Perhaps people would say, "Well, you could achieve that easily." But I don't care, I like that. I do a lot of things differently. I realized people would say, "Wow, that looks very weird." But it works. So, in the end, that's all I need. It works and I'm happy. So now, after two years of painting, it's really easy now. Sometimes I actually do find myself holding a brush like Picasso and it's like I'm almost there.



*Let's Just See Where This Goes*, Oil on canvas, 75" x 55", 2020

And what about achieving that end result that you set for yourself digitally?

That also changed because I realized it's not important to achieve that digital painting. It's not necessary. I actually gained confidence, and with being more confident, it's not important to make a copy of your reference. It's more important to convey this feeling and what I wanted to say in the painting. Not how it's blended, not how the gradient is. For me, at least, I don't care anymore about that stuff. That is also something I had to learn.



*Is This A Lot of Feelings?*, Oil on canvas, 63" x 71", 2020

Failure is a very important part of the learning process. Going in the wrong directions, making mistakes, but accepting them and adapting.

Yeah, and to figure out what is important to you. Obviously I don't have great technical skills but I also don't care a lot. It's only important on a specific level. Being well skilled doesn't add emotion to a painting—for me, at least. I realized that a bad brush stroke can create more feelings than a perfectly blended stroke or whatever.

But I had to learn that. This perfection I used to have before always led me to a different direction and I lost track because of that. I used to think it was important to make a perfectly crafted painting. This was an ambivalence and a conflict. It was always like being on a battlefield with myself.

That's probably because you're coming from the perfect world where software allows you to go way beyond human possibilities. It sounds like you now feel comfortable and confident with your technique?

I feel better [laughs].

And how does it feel now when you see your work? Having more confidence, was there a change from the first shows and how you feel nowadays?

Yeah, because I got to know a lot of the artists and I realized they are just people, and this is so good. Especially in observing their paintings, coming closer, driven by the graphic designer in me, just to find mistakes or just to observe the technique. And realizing it still doesn't matter, because the emotion you had when you first saw the painting had nothing to do with the technique. So why would you care now? So learning that from other paintings by other artists, was very helpful. That and being able to talk about it all helped me realize what's important to me in my work.

At what point did your imagery connect with the concept of identities lost through our online lives? Was that the concept that started everything?

So, there was no concept really, but now, since I have been talking more about my art, I realize I am always driven by the idea of humanity in general, actually. What is humanity about? How did we become what we are? And how are we at this point? What is important to us in terms of society? How is technology changing society? Does it change real humans? Does it change us, or are we still thinking of the same things that philosophers from the past wondered about? When I start drawing, it is very intuitive, but I think it has always been driven by the big question, Why? Though it's hard to really know.

What is your motivation for creating shapes that obscure the human and artificial, like using holes in the heads instead of eyes?

It depends. Sometimes, I think it's not important to give them eyes. It's funny because, when I start drawing or sketching, I do a lot of variants. So you might know one painting, but you don't know the many variants I did before that. Sometimes these variants have eyes, sometimes no eyes. I try to create a specific feeling, which I can't really identify. When I don't react to my own painting, when I don't have a feeling about it, when it's like, "Ah," for me, then I have to go on and work on it. Sometimes the eyes won't help, sometimes the eyes distract, I think. For example, when an eye is looking in a direction, that means something. When the painting looks at your own eyes, that has a meaning. And sometimes I don't want that layer of meaning, I want something else. This is when I avoid giving them eyes.

When you mentioned Ren & Stimpy, I got curious about other artistic influences.

I loved Looney Tunes as well.



So, Ren & Stimpy, Looney Tunes, and Picasso's way of holding a brush?

Yeah, only that. The paintings are "Ah." [laughs]

Was the work of any particular artist groundbreaking or influential for you at any point?

It was Egon Schiele, definitely. When I'm in front of one of his paintings, it never loses me. So the moment I want to achieve is being hit by a painting. He's beating me up all the time. The same goes for Francis Bacon, who I think is a big influence. And so are a lot of German painters. It's a shame that I only know the males actually. Louise Bourgeois is one of the female painters I enjoy. But, in the past, when I started being interested in art and even during art lessons in school, we never talked about female artists. We all know that problem. So I always talk about male artists, but this is how I started, so I guess that's that. I also like George Grosz a lot.

Do you recognize any element of German art movements or characteristics in your work?

It's hard to say, I don't know. Maybe the grumpy part. And also you could say a little bit of melancholy. I like this sadness in German paintings, the melancholy, and this post-war trauma. This is definitely what I'm attracted to. It actually comes back to emotional language again, which is a very strong element because of the war.



*I Agree With Your Look Of Horrified Realization*, Oil on canvas, 63" x 75", 2020

Your social media accounts show a keen interest in what's happening in Germany, especially the growth of right wing political views and, let's say, conservative ways of thinking. It's happening everywhere in the world, but obviously you're focused on where you live. Is this something that you would incorporate in your work, or are you already doing that in a way that I'm missing?

Well, I am German, but you see my face and I don't look German, right? I think it comes from a personal reality I had. I grew up in a very small town and I did not have very bad racist things happen to me, but a lot of little things constantly. I was always the not-German girl in class because I was the only one with black hair. So I dyed my hair a little bit lighter, I don't know if you can see that. And this is what I really don't like. My dad is German, he's blond, and he is very left wing, I would say. My mom is from Iran, and so I grew up always being in conflict between German and the Persian cultures and being perceived differently. That hurt me, of course, because racism sucks. And now to see our society growing more and more in that direction is very painful for me personally. I would say I'm not really a political person in terms of knowing all about what's going on in politics. Maybe I'm not very well-informed sometimes, but I have a very strong urge to do something. I go to demonstrations a lot. I go to the streets. I try to do the little things, and yes, racism is a big thing for me personally, as well.

Do you think your mixed cultural background impels you, even subconsciously, to work with figures that don't fit in any existing gender or racial boxes?

Actually, I think you're right. It's not the main thing I have in my mind, but now that you have said it out loud, I would agree. So, yes, it's not like this is my concept and I do it, but I have a very strong feeling to speak up. It's not only because of my heritage but also, I have a mentally disabled twin brother, so he is "different" as well. And I was always fighting for him, to show everyone that he is not different. So I have a big goal to try and be inclusive. I struggle to not see differences, but I do see them, of course. We are all a bit different. This is a human thing. I can also be very judgmental, too quickly sometimes, and I hate that as well.

In the midst of the 2020 madness, you managed to squeeze in a London solo show. Can you tell me about that?

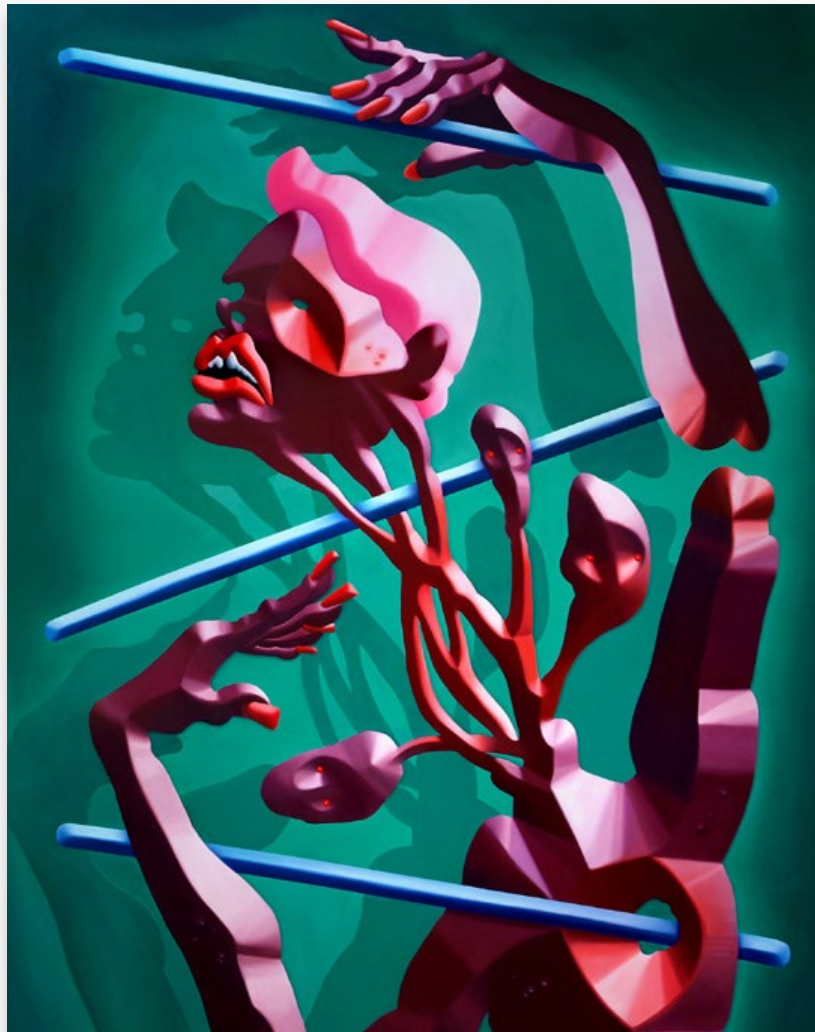
When I started working on that show and I thought about the concept behind it, I came across a quote from the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard that I knew of for a long time. He was questioning the world, basically: the big "Why?" that I was talking about before. The questions like, Why are we here? Why am I here? What is it all about? "I stick my finger in existence —it smells of nothing." That is a part of the original quote, and I liked it so much. I was already carrying this quote around for a while, and I remembered it while I was working on the London show. During this isolation and the pandemic, this quote felt even more relevant. Because I was like, "You know what? When I stick my finger in existence right now, it still smells of nothing." And we are hundreds of years apart from when he originally said that. This is a very short, compressed form of that story because it took a while until I came to that point. One of the paintings is actually titled *I Stick My Finger in Existence*.

And I'm sure that a lot of people connected it with Nirvana's album.

No, no one. Isn't it strange? No one. People were asking me if this is about Covid-19 and the loss of smell and taste. But, actually, no, I was not aware of those symptoms back then, so actually it's a coincidence.

Why did you decide to work with sculpture for that show? I mean, your work always felt like a painting of a sculpture, but it was still amazing to see them, and done so well too.

It was actually one of the first things I created for the show. And I was not sure if I wanted to put them in the show because I was not sure if they were good enough. Again, that perfection thing. I thought, "Well, yes, you enjoy it, why not?"



*Pointless Bid of Control*, Oil on canvas, 55" x 71", 2020

**Do you make them by yourself?**

Yeah. I don't have anyone here who could help me. I would love to have someone, but I have to do that all on my own. I always liked crafting and physical work. When I was young, I built tree houses on my own and things like that. I built a rabbit cage on my own, poor rabbit. It was like a haunted rabbit house. So I felt like I could do a sculpture because I love working with my hands anyway, even more than doing these very delicate parts. I like this rough stuff more, actually, using a hammer and wood, things like that.

**Are they part of your plans for the future?**

My plan for the coming future is actually doing more sculptures. I don't want to give up painting, but I would love to experiment more with sculpting. I think it is because I never felt like a real painter. I didn't really care about the medium at all, but I realized what a sculpture does to me as someone that sees it, that it's as important to me as what the painting does.

*Juxtapoz Magazine, Sasha Bogojev, Spring Issue, 2021*



Cathrin Hoffmann, studio portrait, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery

## Interview with Cathrin Hoffmann: IT STILL SMELLS OF NOTHING

*This Is Tomorrow*, Sonja Teszler, December 14, 2020

German artist, Cathrin Hoffmann, makes paintings of the contemporary individual; alienated, caught up in the temporary pleasures and quick fixes of our techno-capitalist reality. The paintings in her recent exhibition 'IT STILL SMELLS OF NOTHING' at PUBLIC Gallery in London are filled with such lonesome individuals, twisting and folding into themselves. Their exposed, blemished flesh is compartmentalised into exaggerated body parts, organised into various suggestive poses. They are both uncanny and relatable, evoking the 'moods' of isolation: existential reflection, anxiety, bingeing, aimless lounging. I chatted to Hoffmann about her process and influences, her impressions of social media, consumerism, the contemporary psyche and capturing the perfectly imperfect subject.

Sonja Teszler: Could you first talk a bit about how you became interested in painting and how your studies shaped your practice?

Cathrin Hoffmann: I've been drawing since I can remember and I've always been a fan of cartoons, from Looney Tunes to Walt Disney, Bugs Bunny to Donald Duck. I improved my drawing skills by copying these characters and went on to develop my own. As I got older, the idea of becoming an artist was always there, but I felt pressure to study something more 'reasonable', more economically secure. I studied graphic design and worked as an Art Director for several years, but eventually quit everything to pursue art. Since, I have taught myself, but my practice has of course been shaped by my more technical graphic training and even the cartoons of my childhood.

Painting itself and painting the body especially are robust traditions to take on – are there any artists that have influenced your unique style along the way?

I've always been drawn to artists like Louise Bourgeois, Egon Schiele, Francis Bacon, Otto Dix and George Grosz. Their figurative approach, particularly the way they engage directly with the body have had a profound impact on me. With Schiele, it was his theatrical representation of bodies, fragmented and unembellished, with nowhere to hide. As a child I remember finding a book with a painting by George Grosz on its cover, 'The Pillars of Society' (1926); I loved its caricatured angular bodies jostling for space. It was only once I got older that I learnt about the socio-critical context behind his work and as a young German, the dark past is very moving.

When I was growing up I hardly got to know any women's work because of the state of inequality at the time, but now if I was to list all of the female artists who influence me we would run out of words. Dorothea Tanning is important to mention. When I saw her work – particularly her soft sculptures – for the first time at Tate last year I was totally electrified. 'I Stick My Finger In Existence' (2020), a painting in my Public Gallery show, is my homage to her 'Nue Couchée' (1969-70).

The characters in your paintings are often sprawled out and fully exposed, but somehow, they appear withdrawn from the viewer and immersed in the flat surface world of the canvas. They seem disconnected from and irreconcilable with their own selves and desires. Is this sense of contradiction something you're interested in?

Absolutely. I think any thoughtful person will recognise his or her own behaviour as contradictory, though of course I can hardly speak for others. I notice this particularly in my own behaviour when it comes to social media. We live in the age of 'Likes'. Even if I look at it all critically, I still have a strong need to play along.

Isolation during the pandemic highlighted another conflict within me. The ignoring of reality. In the beginning, I was very active in keeping myself up to date with the news, which started to feel like a dystopian movie – Trump idiocy, right-wing extremism, conspiracies, fires, climate

change and so on. It felt like an overload from which one tries to escape, sitting at home watching Netflix. But by just tuning out I got angry with my own decadent boredom. Cosiness in existence is not what we should be aiming for and that is exactly what creates a conflict within myself and my work.

**Your compositions are reminiscent of striking stages that host loudly erotic characters as props, engaging in empty, dramatic exhibitionism. You expose their bodies to an unflattering limelight that renders bare all their grotesque impurities. Do you see this type of performativity as a reflection of the digital (st)age? Why is it important for you to highlight imperfection?**

I often see the work with clear eyes when someone else talks about it. I have no doubt that the digital (st)age has intensified our performative behaviour, cultivating digital selves that 'exist' for many people as viscerally as our physical bodies. I think that my time in advertising has also made me sensitive to the eradication and retouching of imperfection. But nothing is perfect, and this is what I want to show in my work. Although, I don't want to put myself above everything, after all, I am part of this world as well. We are back again at inner conflict!

**Food, cigarettes, sex – your figures seem dependent on various hedonistic 'guilty' pleasures across your canvases, mindlessly consuming them in a way that reflects the insatiable appetite of overstimulated capitalist society. Which symptoms of this system are you interested in depicting?**

Everything you describe is correct, but do the figures really not know what they are doing? For me, the question is, what is the motivation of their behaviour? The excessive desire to consume proves to me that we as individuals have put emphasis primarily upon ourselves. The idea of consumption is intensified by the hyper-capitalist system we have created. But it seems, regardless of the system, we want what we have always wanted – to reach a state of happiness and perfection. Yet, in this hyper-capitalist society the route to happiness is fuelled by a pressure to consume or have the means to consume – I do not only mean goods or food, but also techniques that are supposed to help us self-optimize. However, the vicious cycle continues; once you have satisfied a wish, you are soon dissatisfied because the wish has been fulfilled. This disappointment is like the motor for the next wish – and so it goes on and on.

**The digital finish and the stark, geometric lines applied in your paintings reflect the fragmentation and limited dimensionality of the virtual self. What's your technical process?**

Due to my background as a graphic designer, the digital pen has always been more familiar to me than the real brush. So, before I turn to the analogue act of painting on canvas, I play with virtual compositions using a digital effect that turns a two-dimensional surface into a three-dimensional one by adding light and shadow. The surface then appears in relief. In this sense, you are a painter and sculptor at the same time. For me, the digital approach is comparable to a tool; tools do not leave trace of their existence and are accessible to everyone. But the

difference is the way they are used. It's trial and error – the process is a constant back and forth because the digital effects are completely unpredictable.

**Your recent solo exhibition 'IT STILL SMELLS OF NOTHING' features sculptural and installation pieces alongside your paintings for the first time. Could you talk about the inspirations behind this body of work?**

Strangely enough, I never felt like a painter, although I started painting first. The process is more like a form of digital sculpting and painting in one. My bodies are sculptures that are located in a painted in-between world, where they exist only with themselves and their own shadow. I have noticed that people are often not aware of their own shadow. Still, it reveals something about you. For example, you can hide something behind your back but when the light falls on you, your own shadow betrays you. I think nothing is as it seems at first sight. Shadows not only provide, but disguise information too, and I find that exciting. For this show, after transferring the bodies from the digital screen to canvas to let them enter the real world, I wanted to go one step further and create a new space for paintings – our space. The confusion of proportions and dimensions particularly appeals to me. I enjoyed that process a lot and I'm currently experimenting with more ways to transition bodies between digital and analogue worlds.

**The title 'IT STILL SMELLS OF NOTHING' captures the sense of inertia many of us might associate with lockdown. Were you influenced by the isolation period for these works?**

Definitely. Corona has triggered many questions about life. When you stew in your own juice all day long, everything suddenly seems unreal. You get all the news of the world through the media, and you almost feel lost within the madness. I always try to tell myself how well I am doing and in what a privileged position I am in. But then the moments of defiant ego come again, and you are annoyed and angry, which in turn leads to a bad conscience. You are in a permanent loop. There is a quotation from the existentialist Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard about the absurdity of human existence, agency and purpose that I could not get out of my head, and which I had in mind throughout the time I was working on my show for PUBLIC Gallery. The title comes from its first line:

"I stick my finger in existence — it smells of nothing."

**One of your most striking works in this exhibition is 'Blue Skull With At Least A Cherry' (2020). It's an intimidating, vibrant blue bust that feels openly confrontational amongst the other decadent figures, glaring at the viewer with a menacing grimace. Can you talk a bit about this piece?**

I am glad to hear that. When I decided to make sculptures for this exhibition, I wanted to start with something 'classical' like a bust. After I made different sketches, I realized that I didn't want the figure to be transferred frontally from the two-dimensional screen into the three-dimensional world. It should be averted, but not let the viewer out of sight. The bust



is completely flat and without profile from behind, as if it has been cut from the digital realm and placed on the pedestal. To be honest, I don't know what state of mind it has. I see a new emotion in her every day. Disapproving from above, fearful and insecure, surprised or decadently bored. It has been thrown into the real world, but, as the title says, has "At Least A Cherry".

<http://thisistomorrow.info/articles/cathrin-hoffman>

# METAL



Cathrin Hoffmann, studio portrait, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Public Gallery

## Cathrin Hoffmann: Reality Leaves Its Mark

*METAL*, Frederika Park, November 16, 2020

In this post-digital, pandemic-ridden, upside-down world, what does it mean to be human anymore? What remains? These are questions that Cathrin Hoffmann, a self-taught artist from Hamburg, poses and plays with in her debut solo exhibition, *It Still Smells of Nothing*, showing at London's Public Gallery. She tells us, "There is a quotation from the existentialist Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard that I could not get out of my head while I was working on my current show. This is where the title comes from: 'I stick my finger in existence — it smells of nothing.'



Installation view, Cathrin Hoffmann, *IT STILL SMELLS OF NOTHING*

This series of grotesque and glorious bodies was born out of the isolation and surrealism of this year, a reflection on the artist's experience of "bored decadence." She divulges, "BLM, Trump idiocy, right-wing extremism, conspiracy theories, big fires, climate change, and so on, make it feel like our divided society is about to explode while we are sitting at home watching Netflix. It's like an overload from which one tries to escape. Trying to ignore reality, swiping through your Instagram feed bubble, watching series, listening to podcasts and getting bored. I caught myself doing this and got angry. Cosiness in existence is not what we should be aiming for, and that creates a conflict within myself."

Cathrin quit her job as a graphic designer to pursue art. "I always wanted to become an artist but my environment advised me to learn something 'useful' and to live my creativity on a second level. So, I first studied graphic design but after working as an Art Director for several years, I realised this is not what I wanted."

Her paintings are mapped out digitally, then recreated manually with oil paint, charcoal and gel. The creative process itself reflects the artist's simultaneous engagement with and rejection of technology. It speaks to the new levels of both isolation and connection that we are all experiencing this year. Painting the bodies back onto canvas is "like bringing life into them where dirt, brush hairs and parts of myself stick to them. After all, reality leaves its mark."

The results are captivating; a collection of contorted shapes and body parts, uncomfortably bringing together of the familiar and the alien. Isolated forms with only their own looming shadows for company. That sounds like an accurate description being a human during lockdown, right? "Digitalisation is changing us, and I mean that without any judgement..." Cathrin says. "It is great how much digital possibilities help us to stay in touch and to be able to look into every part of the world. But Zoom, FaceTime or Skype won't ever beat reality."

As well as paintings, Cathrin is presenting sculptures for the first time as part of this exhibition, which she says is strange because she “never felt like a painter, although I started painting first.” Her painting process feels like a form of sculpting anyway. She describes her bodies as “sculptures located in a painted, in-between world with only themselves and their own shadows” and adds, “I enjoyed that process a lot and I’m currently experimenting with more ways to transition these bodies over both worlds – digital and analogue.” Watch this space!



Installation view, Cathrin Hoffmann, *IT STILL SMELLS OF NOTHING*

<https://metalmagazine.eu/en/post/article/cathrin-hoffmann>

# Credit



Installation view, Cathrin Hoffmann: *It Still Smells of Nothing*

## It Still Smells of Nothing: Cathrin Hoffmann at Public Gallery

*Credit*, Florence Kettle, October 27, 2020

Public Gallery has been busy this year. Having put on a mammoth digital exhibition *NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT* from 6th May to 10th July, Cathrin Hoffmann's first ever solo exhibition is the third physical show in their new Middlesex Street space. Opening on 14th October, the show reflects on the liminality of lockdown and on creativity in isolation, featuring the artist's first sculptural works alongside eight oil paintings.

The first thing to mention about Hoffmann's paintings is their scale. These works have presence, and they demand pause. Discussing this with the artist and other attendees at the opening, there is recognition of the significance of coming to see these works of riotous red and blue after months of lockdown, experiencing work exclusively on screen. Hoffmann notes that while this year has been significant in her life as a maker, many people have been discovering her work through Instagram, piece by piece, squares on a feed. This lends an additional sense of significance to the show, which is also testament to chance and the importance of working relationally; Hoffmann first met the Public team when undertaking a residency in London last year, and the show's development has built from there.

The idea of Hoffmann's audience growing through digital platforms this year is fascinating given the artist's process and relationship to the digital. She composes her pieces on a graphic tablet before rendering the final composition in paint, having said that using the tablet allows her to think sculpturally and to play with the whole shape of the body. Hoffmann describes her journey to becoming an artist as one born in struggle; having worked as a graphic designer for around 10 years, she turned 30 and decided to pursue her latent artistic dreams. She describes a period of 'breakdown'; she threw it all up in the air, trading security for precarity, determined to work through the difficulty. This journey seems apt to our current moment, as in 2020 Hoffmann has again been making in adversity. The figures in her paintings are anguished and contorted, exuding discomfort, alone with their shadows. They are confronting to look at yet appear settled in repose. In this way, the work embodies what so many people have described experiencing in recent months: oscillation between optimism and despair, contentedness and boredom, relief and grief. These ideas have been brought into immediate relationship through the collective isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic and are made manifest in these contradictory bodies.

The sculptural language established in the paintings enables the sculptures, *Blue Skull With At Least A Cherry* and *Triage*, to sit in natural dialogue with them. These pieces isolate what is already exaggerated in the paintings, in terms of the outsized hands and heads as well as in the textural palette of lumps and bumps. Hoffmann says she is 'attracted by the ambivalence between perfection and imperfection,' and seeks through this to question what comprises the human in a post-digital age. Continuous across her paintings and sculpture are amplified pimples, nipples, lips and acrylic nails – the latter perhaps most notably so, alternately vividly coloured, gem-like structures or yellowed, decaying appendages. Talking about her process of painting from digitally made images, she expresses delight in the moments when the paint medium allows and necessitates blemish to emerge from the digital precision: the brushstrokes, the dirt, the hair, the inconsistency, the humanity.

Having encountered Hoffmann's bored, lonely, horny, open, threatening, playful work at Public, I came away feeling hopeful. It seems we might be able to glory in the waiting while it lasts, knowing the buzz of the gallery is safe.

<https://project.credit/journal/it-still-smells-of-nothing-cathrin-hoffman-at-public-gallery>



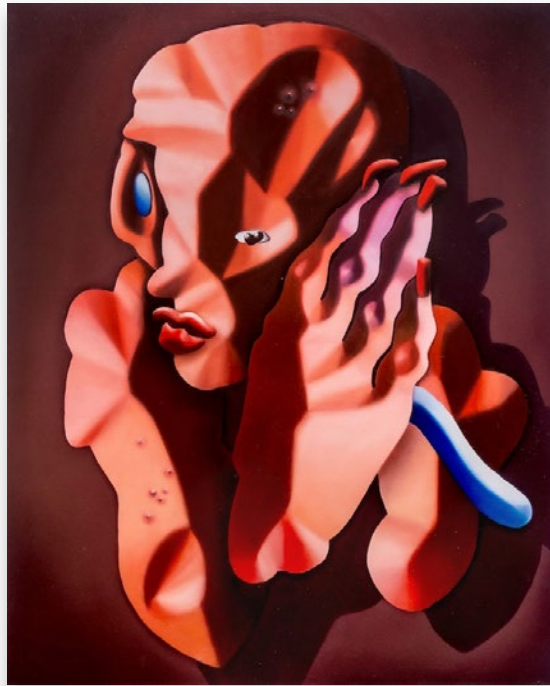
Installation view, Cathrin Hoffmann: *It Still Smells of Nothing*

## It Still Smells of Nothing: Cathrin Hoffmann's New Paintings of Love and Loss

*Juxtapoz*, Sasha Bogojev, October 13, 2020

It's known that a freakily unique symptom of Covid 19 is the loss of the olfaction, so it's freakily unique that *It Still Smells of Nothing* is the title of Cathrin Hoffmann's debut solo show at London's Public Gallery opening October 14, 2020. We're thrilled to get a sneak peak of the multi-media artist's colorful, piercing observations about what it means to be human in the post-digital age. Recent months of isolation have left each of us to our quiet thoughts and devices, tethered to technology, and Hoffman has created a landscape of sculpture, painting and installation where we can share her vision.

"I created a new virtual body, with its weaknesses and idiosyncrasies, to probe what our present time with modern technology, digitization, and hyper-capitalism has made us become?" Hoffmann explains the idea behind her work for *It Still Smells of Nothing*. "How do we exist and behave? What is human, what remains?" Recognizable figures dominated by anthropomorphic effigies, the visuals are contorted and distorted, reaching out into a void but paralyzed by competing and confounding forces. 3D renderings create uniform human bodies, differentiated by random skin imperfections or overgrown nails, as Homo Sapiens, accompanied by a shadow companion, seems to devolve into anthropoid. Rarely interacting with others, even natural elements or characters, she captures them seeking connection. Strongly reinforced by the past period of lockdown and isolation, the Hamburg-based artist continues her quest to understand the essential aspects of being, such as pain and pleasure, love and loss, isolation and connection, birth and death.



Cathrin Hoffmann, *Is This Not A Voluntary Concern?*, 2020

The exhibition includes a site-specific installation created at the gallery, along with her first series of sculptural works in which the artist's dimensional imagery transcends into the physical realm. Made from cut out wood or hard-coated fiber reinforced foam, these works contrast the inherent flaws of analog, hand-made work, the perceived perfection of the digital world, and what exists in between. "My digital work is bright, polished and perfect," Hoffmann says. "As soon as I try to reproduce this, I realize it is impossible. It is this area in between that interests me, the perfectly imperfect." In portraying her nude, deformed, and fragile figures, the artist creates a visual drama about collective anxiety in an increasingly online world, for human beings seek to break out of a digital persona. —*Sasha Bogojev*

<https://www.juxtapoz.com/news/painting/it-still-smells-of-nothing-cathrin-hoffmann-s-new-paintings-of-love-and-loss/>



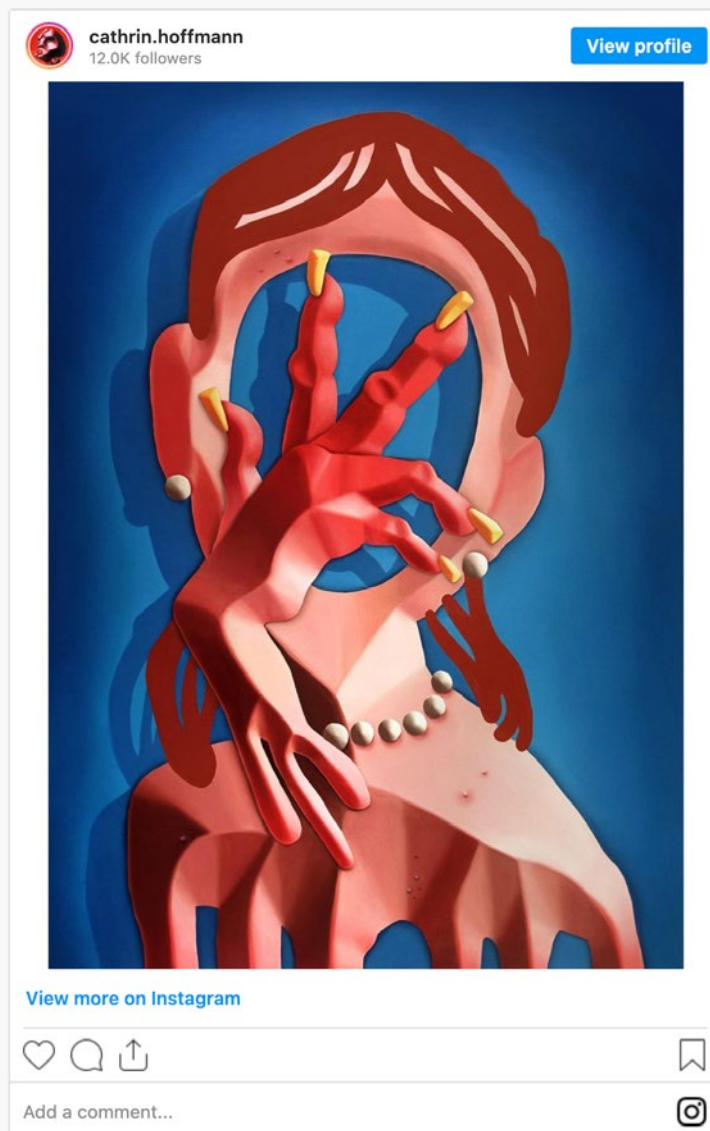
# MONOPOL

Magazin für Kunst und Leben

## Insta-Watchlist: Cathrin Hoffmann "Instagram verändert auch die Malerei"

Monopol Magazine, Anika Meier, June 5, 2020

In der Reihe "Insta-Watchlist" stellen wir Künstler vor, die uns auf Instagram aufgefallen sind. Die Malerin Cathrin Hoffmann schafft hybride Figuren zwischen analoger und digitaler Welt und hat der Plattform viel zu verdanken - ihre Kunst will sie aber nicht zu sehr von Likes beeinflussen lassen



## **Frau Hoffmann, warum ist Malerei gut auf Instagram aufgehoben?**

Auf Instagram sind die Grundvoraussetzung für alle gleich, wenn man einmal von den Gegebenheiten ausgeht. Jeder kann sich dort ein Profil anlegen und anfangen, zu posten. So war das bei mir auch. Ich habe Arbeiten von mir geteilt und die Reaktionen abgewartet. Reagiert überhaupt jemand? Ein Gemälde hat den Vorteil, dass es schnell auf Instagram erfasst werden kann, wenn es sich nicht um eine kleinteilige Komposition handelt. Das verändert auch die Malerei. Ich arbeite meist mit ein oder zwei Figuren, die ich großflächig auf die Leinwand bringe. Videos und Skulpturen funktionieren oft weniger gut als zweidimensionale Werke. Um Skulpturen müsste man herumlaufen können, Videos müsste man mehr Aufmerksamkeit, sprich Zeit widmen.

**Ihre Figuren und Bildwelten sind wie gemacht für die sozialen Medien. Ihre Figuren sind sehr präsent und wirken oft, als würden sie für ein Selfie in emotionalen Momenten posieren.**

Die Figuren sind digital modelliert und analog reproduziert. Der Weg führt vom Digitalen ins Analoge und zurück ins Digitale auf Instagram. Dort wirken sie vielleicht etwas zu glatt. Mir wäre es zu einfach, Figuren zu malen, die Menschen darstellen. Eine Frau isst einen Apfel. Verstanden. Nächstes Bild. Ich erschaffe Kreaturen, die nah genug am Menschen sind, damit man sich mit ihnen identifizieren kann und weit genug davon entfernt, damit man sich auf sie einlassen kann. Wenn ich etwas sehe, das mich erst einmal abschreckt, schaue ich genauer hin.

**Hat sich Ihre Malerei durch Instagram verändert? Achten Sie darauf, wie viele Likes Ihre Bilder bekommen und passen die Bildinhalte dann entsprechend an?**

Das mache ich nicht. Die Sorge aber hatte ich, dass Likes mich beeinflussen könnten. Oft sind es nicht meine besten Arbeiten, die viele Likes bekommen. Natürlich irritiert mich das.

**Wenn ein Bild also viele Likes bekommt, wissen Sie, dass Sie doch anders weitermachen sollten?**

Genau. (lacht) Likes sind mir mittlerweile egal, wichtig ist meine Präsenz auf Instagram. Für mich haben sich im vergangenen Jahr viele Türen geöffnet. Ich hatte es zuerst ohne Instagram versucht, ich bin viel zu Openings hier in Hamburg gegangen und habe aktiv Galerien kontaktiert. Beachtet wurde ich kaum, Antworten auf Mails kamen nie.

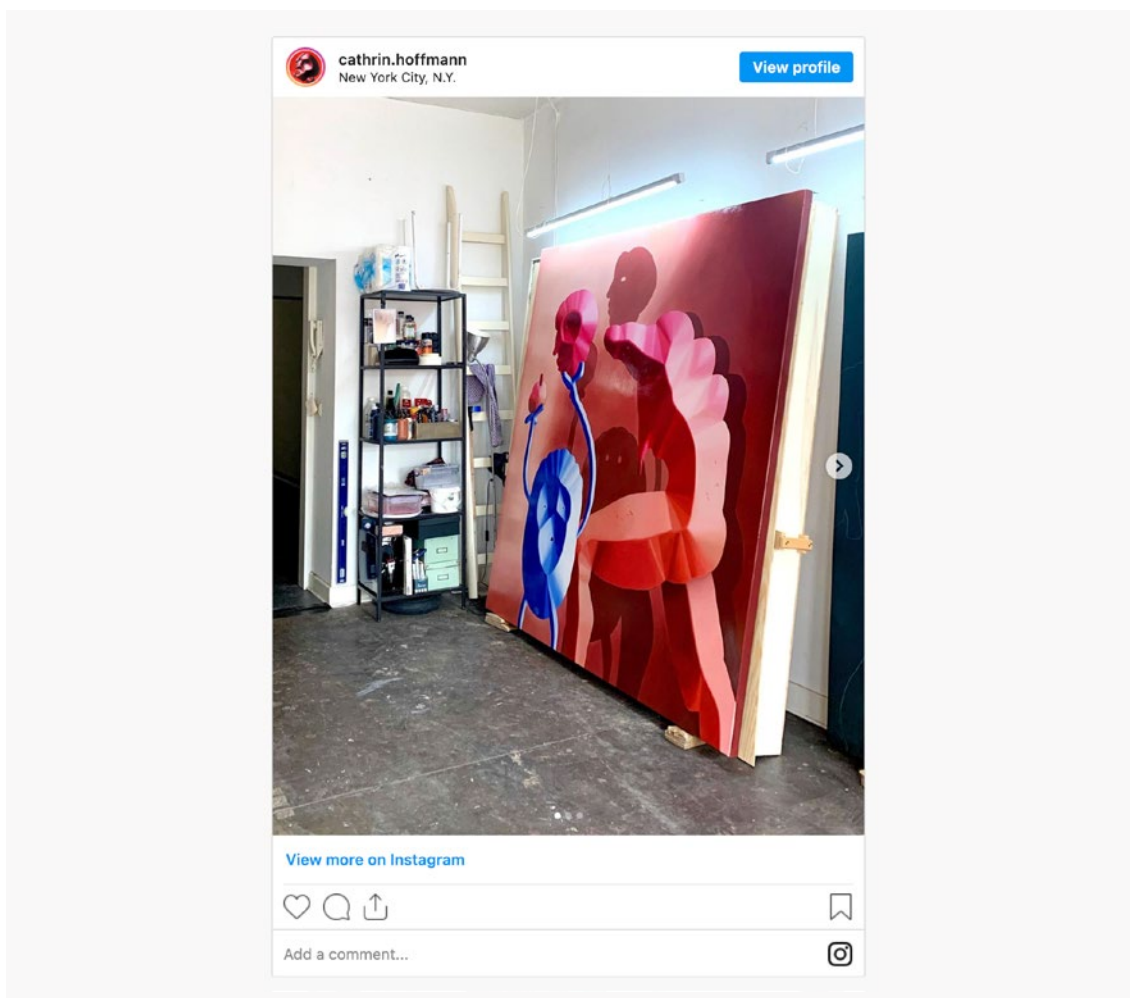
**Und dann haben Sie es über Instagram versucht?**

Als ich acht Monate lang auf Reisen in Lateinamerika unterwegs war, hat mir ein Freund empfohlen, meine Arbeiten auf Instagram zu teilen. Das war Ende 2016. Ich dachte zuerst, es sei zu spät und die Nummer sei gelaufen. Irgendwie habe ich mich dann doch überzeugen lassen und schnell gemerkt, wie leicht man mit vielen Leuten in Kontakt kommt. Plötzlich waren die erste Einladungen zu Ausstellungen in Amsterdam und New York da. In Amsterdam war ich

Teil der Gruppenausstellung "Post Digital Pop" bei The Garage mit unter anderem Brandon Lipchik, in New York war es die Gruppenausstellung "Post Analog Studio" bei The Hole NY mit Adam Parker Smith und Robin F. Williams. Und dann habe ich mich auf die Plop Residency des Künstlers Oli Epp beworben und eine Zusagen bekommen, vom "Juxtapoz Magazine" wurde ich zu einer Ausstellung im Rahmen der Art Basel in Miami eingeladen. Ohne Instagram wäre ich immer noch in Hamburg unterwegs und würde bei Openings irgendwem "Hallo!" sagen und hoffen, dass sich daraus etwas ergibt.

Jetzt zeigen Sie gemeinsam mit Liam Fallon Werke bei Duve in Berlin. Aktuell ist viel von Post-Digital Pop die Rede, also der Verbindung von Internetkultur und Konsum. Den Begriff hat der von Ihnen gerade genannte Oli Epp geprägt. Fühlen Sie sich dieser Richtung zugehörig?

Ich wurde ziemlich schnell, wenn nicht sogar von Anfang an, mit Post-Digital Pop in Verbindung gebracht. Dagegen wehre ich mich nicht. Manchen Leuten hilft es eben, wenn es Schubladen oder Etiketten gibt. Ich selbst sehe mich als zeitgenössische Künstlerin, die sich mit Medien und Themen unserer Zeit befasst. Alex Duve übrigens hat mich auch auf Instagram gefunden und gefragt, ob ich nicht eine Ausstellung zum Gallery Weekend 2020 machen wollen würde. Gestern bin ich mit dem letzten Bild fertig geworden.



Wie gehen Sie damit um, dass Ihre Ausstellung nicht wie geplant zum Gallery Weekend mit einem großen Opening und Besucherandrang beginnen kann?

Erst einmal bin ich erleichtert, dass alle Arbeiten fertig sind. Aber ja, normalerweise hätte ich mich mit Freunden getroffen und gefeiert, als ich mit meiner letzten Arbeit für die Ausstellung fertig war. Stattdessen bin ich um 19 Uhr ins Bett gegangen, weil ich nicht mehr ins Atelier musste. Als Nächstes steht eine Einzelausstellung im September in London an, damit geht es nun nahtlos im Atelier weiter. Bei Duve gab es keine Vernissage. Wir haben in einer privateren Atmosphäre eine bestimmte Anzahl an Besuchern nacheinander in der Galerie mit dem Mindestabstand von 1,5 Metern und Mundschutz empfangen. Termine müssen vereinbart werden, es gibt Time Slots.

Sie haben die Entstehung Ihrer Ausstellung auf Instagram fast täglich kommuniziert. Sie zeigen, wie sie im Studio arbeiten und die Bilder, die entstehen. Hat sich durch Corona und den Digital-Boom Ihr Blick auf Instagram verändert? Wochenlang blieben uns fast nur die sozialen Medien und das Internet, um hinaus in die Welt zu schauen. Hat sich bei Ihnen ein Überdruß eingestellt und ein neuer Hunger nach Kunst im realen Raum, was man aktuell oft hört und liest?

Ja, einen Instagram-Overload habe ich auch. Mir fehlen meine Freunde und der Austausch mit Künstlern. Eigentlich wäre ich jetzt schon in New York gewesen. Ich wollte im April zum Opening der Ausstellung bei The Hole fliegen. Die Show findet jetzt unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit statt. Alles ist nur digital zu sehen, eine Eröffnung gab es nicht. Jetzt im Juni würde meine Residency in Italien im Palazzo Monti beginnen. Das haben wir jetzt aber auch auf das nächste Jahr verschoben. Im nächsten Jahr wird viel passieren, das steht fest.

<https://www.monopol-magazin.de/insta-watchlist-cathrin-hoffmann>



Installation view, Cathrin Hoffmann + Liam Fallon: *Somewhere in-between*

## Cathrin Hoffmann Interview

*Floorr Magazine*, Natalia Gonzalez Martin, September 2, 2020

“In my opinion, the power of a painting can never be achieved by a digital painting. All the senses that suddenly kick in in real life and the physical part of myself which is part of each painting.”

Could you tell us a bit about yourself and your background? Where did you study?

I always wanted to be an artist as a child. But I didn't have the background or the surroundings to understand how I could achieve that. Instead, I thought I need to study something which would be economically wise more sustainable. So I studied Graphic Design and started working as an Art Director. After some years in this job, I became more and more dissatisfied and had a little personal crisis and went traveling for 8 months with my boyfriend through Latin America. We rented a room for one month in Leon/Nicaragua and I couldn't stop making

art. 12 hours or even longer a day. Apparently, the penny had dropped. When I came back I quit working in my old job and started from zero. Although I didn't earn any money and lived from my savings, I loved it. In the beginning, I have tried out many things like collages, wall paintings, installations, or sculptures and taught myself to paint in oil through YouTube videos.

Your exhibition at Duve was a result of a collaboration between your work and Liam Fallon's, the process of creation for the pieces exhibited was very organic and the communication between the two is evident. After being used to working on your own in the studio, artists sometimes struggle to work as a group, how did you navigate this and what were the biggest challenges?

Working with Liam was not a challenge at all luckily. We found out from the very beginning when we talked about rough ideas that we were on the same page. And so it felt very natural to present thoughts or ideas to each other. Due to corona we hadn't had the chance to meet in the flesh but we messaged or facetimes instead and maybe that was even better. For example, Liam would provide me with an idea he had in the morning via messenger and I could carry his idea with me the whole day and do some researches and would sent him my input back. With this time delay I could put myself even more into his thoughts and vice versa, I think.



*His Buttonhole Is So Empty And Empty, 2020*

Your background as a graphic designer has had a clear influence in your work, however, the painterly qualities it offers are evident. How do you blend both worlds and which elements from each are you interested in preserving?

I feel more comfortable with my drawing tablet because I have more practice at it. The study of graphic design and more than 10 years of professional experience have defined my skills, and so I use them. But in the end, I need to start the battle with the analog canvas otherwise my digital artwork would never come alive.

In my opinion, the power of a painting can never be achieved by a digital painting. All the senses that suddenly kick in in real life and the physical part of myself which is part of each painting. This is the key. Seeing and feeling a painting in the flesh can never be replaced by seeing it as a photograph or a printout or on screen. Although I still struggle with the painter skills I always remind myself that without the reproduction in oil my work would only be an empty digital shiny cover. Furthermore, I am attracted by the ambivalence between perfection and imperfection. My digital work is bright, polished and perfect. As soon as I try to reproduce this perfection, I realize that it's impossible. Dirt and hair stick in the paint, transitions are not perfect and brush strokes have left their marks. All this is not visible at first sight but as soon as you get closer to the painting – Reality has left its traces.

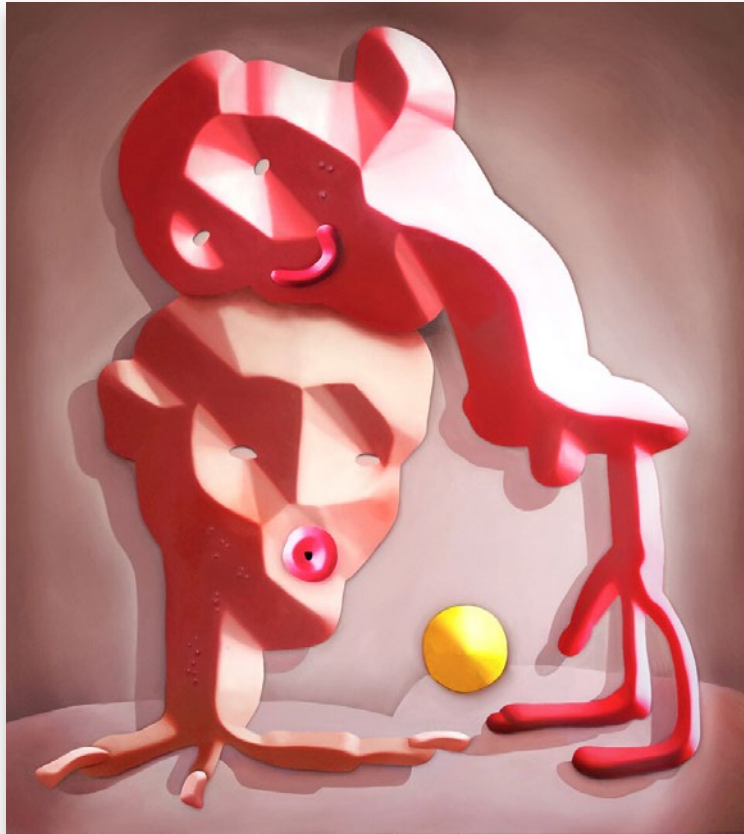
**The characters presented in the universe you have created are almost human, but also distorted enough to make you question their nature. What sort of imagery do you work from and what is the process for creating these figures?**

Well, I try to portrait us. Us humans. I create a likeness to a human figure which is not real of course because I create them digitally and I want them to be close enough to be recognizable as beings but also far enough away so that one can get involved with them through the emotion. And this is exactly where my interest lies. By not showing a clear visual language but still enough bits to hold on, it allows to engage oneself even more with the painting.

A new virtual body with its weaknesses and strangeness. I do not work with any other pictures except for my sketches. When painting digitally, I misuse an effect that adds the illusion of a third dimension only by adding light and shadow. This effect would follow every stroke I am doing and would also simulate carvings when I erase parts of the figure. It's like painting and sculpting digitally at once.

**Your titles offer key information to the paintings, they are very bold and direct - How do you go about naming your work?**

I title my works at the very end. As soon as it is finished on canvas, I sit in front of it and look at it again. Often new emotions and aspects appear and with these feelings, I would title it. Sometimes I also have collected quotations from books, films, series, etc., which I browse through and compare with the painting. When it clicks, I take it and adapt it, if it doesn't I go on. This process is always very intuitive.



*The Pretend Double-Check, 2020*

What artwork have you seen recently that has resonated with you?

Because of Corona, I haven't been able to visit museums or galleries for a while. After the restrictions have been loosed I recently started again. But the last impressively resonating work of art I saw was Kara Walker's fountain at the Tate.

Is there else in the pipeline?

I am already working on my next Solo show in London at Public gallery in October.

<https://www.floor magazine.com/issue-25/cathrin-hoffmann>



# Schön!



*Somewhere In-Between.* Photo provided by DUVE Berlin.

## somewhere in-between | cathrin hoffmann + liam fallon at duve berlin

*Schön!*, Braden Bjella, May 29, 2020

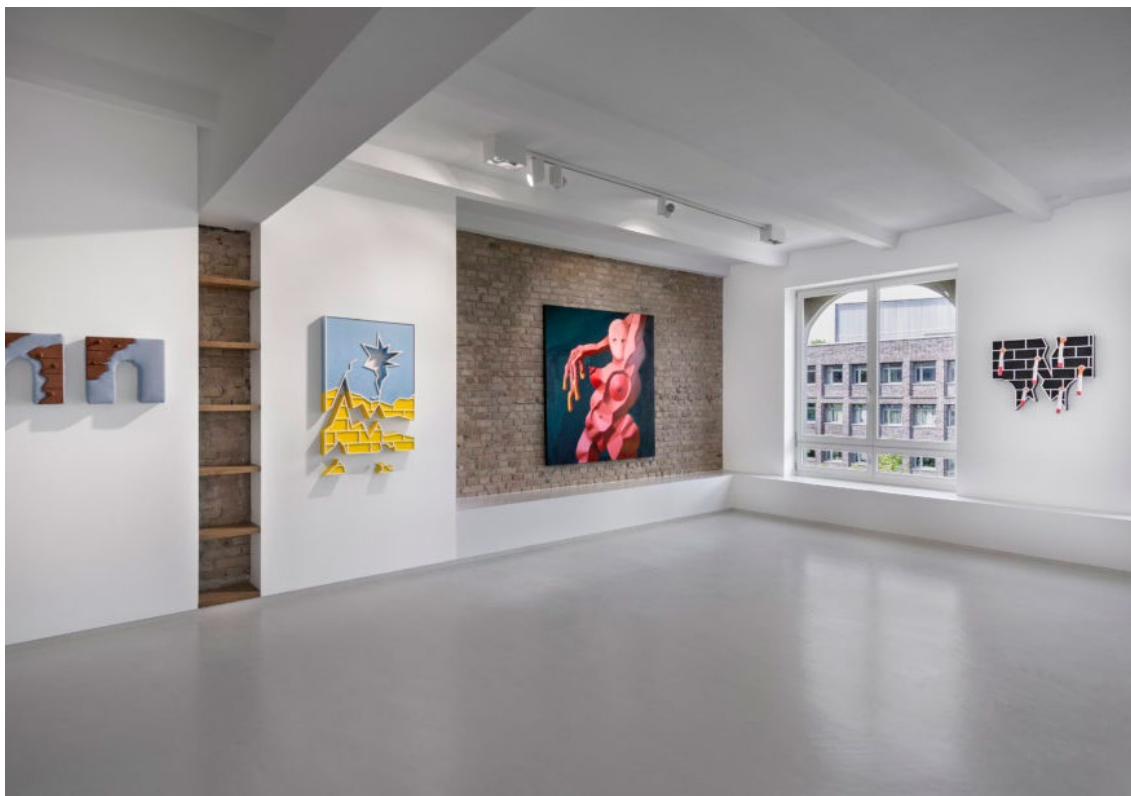
Cathrin Hoffmann and Liam Fallon create abstract work for increasingly abstract times, a notion borne out in their current exhibition at DUVE Berlin, *Somewhere In-Between*. The show, currently on view in-person at DUVE Berlin and virtually thanks to Artland, is somewhat of a duet between the two artists. Both artists are endlessly capable storytellers, and as one ventures through the exhibition, strong narratives form detailing a series of dualities — society and isolation, openness and privacy, holding on and letting go.

While the artists naturally explore these themes differently, the ease with which their pieces blend works to blur the distinction, resulting in a deeply personal show that does not fear getting too alternately playful or cerebral. *Schön!* spoke with the artists to hear more about the show and the works within.

What themes do you see carrying through your various pieces featured in this show?

LF: The idea of two is something that is carried throughout the works, and this is explored in multiple ways. When I was making the work, I was often thinking about the terms 'head to head', 'push and pull', 'give and take', and from that, it started to physically manifest in the work; for example, a physical action which then causes something to break — and I suppose really questioning how I can physically and metaphorically bring about this idea of '2'. Even in the sense of the naming of the work, I think that it can often be the key to opening up that conversation. I think the work 'Blowback' does that quite well, as it alludes to a back and forth between two people.

CH: When Liam and I started thinking about this show as a duo, we wondered how we could really play with this idea of "duo". That was our starting point, and after some research, we came up with the term "dyad", which can roughly be defined as a pair of individuals existing together. With this term in mind, new thoughts arose while I was working on the paintings. Like the meaning of otherness, for example. So that it is only possible to develop further in interaction with a counterpart. Identity is nothing if everything is the same, which would consequently lead to a standstill. Or to think completely differently, that individuality is only fiction because everyone wants to be different, for the reason that everyone is the same anyway. The "dyad" can also be seen as a construct of resonance. That means, how do we react to others or to objects or to ideas/thoughts/nature etc., and what does the echo in our behaviour look like that comes back? And how do we then react with it again? And so on and so forth.



*Somewhere In-Between.* Photo provided by DUVE Berlin.

Liam, you incorporate many everyday objects into your work. Do you find there's one object you keep returning to? Why do you think your mind has settled on it?

LF: I often return to the brickwork pieces as for me there is a constant line of inquiry with them. Over the years, they have become an ongoing series, and with that, I can come and go with them; adapting them when it's necessary and working on different things in the meantime. Due to my work being an investigation into private and public, I think that for me, the brick wall is an emblem for this; a physical marker between two sides and the presence of them alludes to the encounters happening either side of them. Based on this and as they define the different elements in my practice, I think it'll be a motif that I use for quite some time!

Cathrin, there's a strong sense of humour through much of your work. What do you think has been most influential to your sense of humour and your push to explore that on canvas?

CH: First of all, great question! Not many people see humour in my pictures. But it is definitely contained in them. In general, my pictures often deal with human existence. The consciousness about it and at the same time the knowledge about the inevitable death. This creates a predicament that either leads to rigidity and denial or depression. And I think the only way to fight against this discouraging maelstrom of thoughts is humour. Humour is typically human, and perhaps that is exactly what evolution has been about since our consciousness has fully developed. Well, I'm no biologist, but at least for me, it's crucial.



Cathrin Hoffmann, *That Spread Fast*, 2020. Photo provided by DUVE Berlin.



*Is This A Lot Of Feelings* by Cathrin Hoffman. Photo provided by DUVE Berlin

Speaking of biology, your work also features a lot of body-like forms. What first attracted you to the human body as a subject? What parts do you most enjoy playing with artistically?

CH: I want to portray the human being and the sentimental value in our present time. This includes the physicality. I understand the body as a place of action, like a crime scene, and this is how I want to stage it. I create a human figure that has many similarities but is still clearly unreal against timeless empty backgrounds that are like intermediate worlds. A new virtual body with its weaknesses and peculiarities. I like to twist and strain the body so that it already hurts the eye. But only this can create a new level, which separates from the pure body and concentrates completely on the emotion. That's my intention.

For both of you, how did the period of quarantine that preceded this show impact how you view the pieces in this show today?

CH: I noticed that our title for the show was strangely prophetic. "Somewhere In Between", I think, describes the quarantine situation quite aptly. I have a similar feeling about my work on the show. COVID-19 is like a burning glass hovering over us. It focuses and amplifies both the good and the worst in our society, especially in social interaction. I think that my pictures, which have anyway focused on people and interpersonal relationships, suddenly caricature exactly this new weird world.

LF: In terms of context, it's not necessarily changed my view of the works. However, I always attend the exhibition install to help and to sort out any last-minute things, but obviously, for this show, I've not been able to and I've found that quite difficult. But it's been a necessary time for reflection with my work. But saying that, I think there are many artists all over the world in the same position, and I think there is a little bit of comfort in that. Being stuck in this weird position has, if anything, forced me to reflect on the works and the making of the pieces; figuring out the next steps and acknowledging where changes need to be made.

**Why do you feel your works complement each other so well?**

LF: Well, I think a shared area of interest in both of our work is that of abstraction — Cathrin's work is figurative, but at the same time, not figurative at all! The forms that she paints are completely alien-like, and they're often paired with objects which then helps with the unwrapping of the themes in the painting. For me, this is where the parallels can begin being drawn and is one of the main reasons as to why I feel Cathrin's work complements mine. In my work, despite the forms appearing as brick walls, the objects that they're paired with anthropomorphise them and then they suddenly take on the form of abstracted bodies. I think there is a real echoing of backwards and forwards between our work...I also can't deny the fact that her paintings are incredibly sculptural, too!

CH: What I find special about Liam's work is that he manages to create emotions through surfaces and everyday objects. Blasted walls combined with open belts or soft fabrics covered with hardwood suddenly create narratives in the mind without the representation of a single figure. I think that my painted figures, which also appear very sculptural, complement this part, and that together we tell a whole new story. Have the creatures I created perhaps escaped through the broken walls? Were they locked up at all, or did they perhaps even destroy them? Or is it simply a feeling of social or inner fragmentation that we carry within us? I find it exciting that there is no clear answer, but that the pieces of the emotional puzzle can be put together with both of our works.

Somewhere In-Between is on view at DUVE Berlin until July 1, 2020.

<https://schonmagazine.com/cathrin-hoffmann-liam-fallon-duve-berlin/>



Installation view, *Virgula Divina*

## Virgula Divina: The Distorted and Otherworldly Figures of Cathrin Hoffmann

*Juxtapoz*, August 20, 2019

What a time for painting. There are a group of artists across the world making great works with oils and acrylics, stretching and reimagining what the figurative genre can be. German-based painter Cathrin Hoffmann is one of those artists, bending figures to almost appear like they are distant relatives of humankind, but participating in everyday acts, like eating french fries or smoking a cigarette. The works are a fresh reminder that a new painting movement has emerged with continually exciting potential to evolve.

Hoffmann currently has works on display at a duo-solo-show, *Virgula Divina*, on view through August 31, 2019 at Setareh Gallery in Düsseldorf, Germany. Her paintings are shown along with the distorted and abstract ceramic sculpture works of Anton Alvarez, a Swedish-Chilean artist who is equally evolving the genre he works in.



Cathrin Hoffmann hat für ihre Werke in der Ausstellung digitale Fabelwesen geschaffen. Foto: Lukas Vogt

## Künstler und Galerie unterstützen Trinkwasser-Projekt

*Westdeutsche Zeitung*, July 28, 2019

Düsseldorf Anton Alvarez und Cathrin Hoffmann, aktuell zu sehen an der Hohe Straße, verzichten auf einen Teil des Erlöses.

„Setareh X Viva Con Agua“ steht in kantigen Buchstaben an der Glastür der Hohe Straße 53. Dort am Schwanenmarkt, wo die Galerie Setareh (Königsallee) seit geraumer Zeit eine Dependence für junge, zumindest noch nicht etablierte Künstler betreibt. Derzeit stehen dort wulstige Objekte, die an Amphoren und Schalen erinnern, im Kontrast zu Gemälden mit geheimnisvollen Figuren. Die Skulpturen stammen vom Chilenen Anton Alvarez, die Bilder von Cathrin Hoffmann. Doch was hat das mit „Viva con agua“ zu tun, der weltweit agierenden Non-Profit-Organisation, die Projekte für sauberes Wasser in Ostafrika und Indien unterstützt? Die 2006 gegründete, gemeinnützige GmbH, die auch in den Bereichen Musik und Kunst Sponsoren akquiriert, kooperiert erstmals in Deutschland mit einer Kunstgalerie. Das heißt,

die Künstler Alvarez und Hoffmann und der Galerist verzichten zusammen auf rund 30 Prozent des Erlöses der Kunstwerke. Die Summe geht an „Viva con agua“.

Nachhaltige Projekte zu unterstützen, ist weniger ein Novum denn langjähriger Mega-Trend und gehört in der Bildenden Kunst sicherlich zum guten Ton. In Kontakt zu „Viva con agua“ kam Setareh vor einigen Jahren und beteiligte sich an der „Millerntor Gallery“ im gleichnamigen Fußballstadion in St. Pauli. Bei diesem Kunst-Festival können sich Künstler seit 2011 einmal im Jahr in Street-Art, ultramoderner Malerei, Bildhauerei, Fotografie und Videokunst ausleben. 70 Prozent des Happening-Erlöses fließen in Wasser- und Bildungsprojekte.

Die Werke der beiden Künstler, die jetzt bei Setareh X zu sehen und zu erwerben sind, stellen keinen direkten Bezug zum Nachhaltigkeits-Thema her. Wäre auch zu platt. Sie unterstützen das Wasser-Projekt durch ihren Anteils-Verzichts, aber zeigen nicht etwa Wasserkunst.

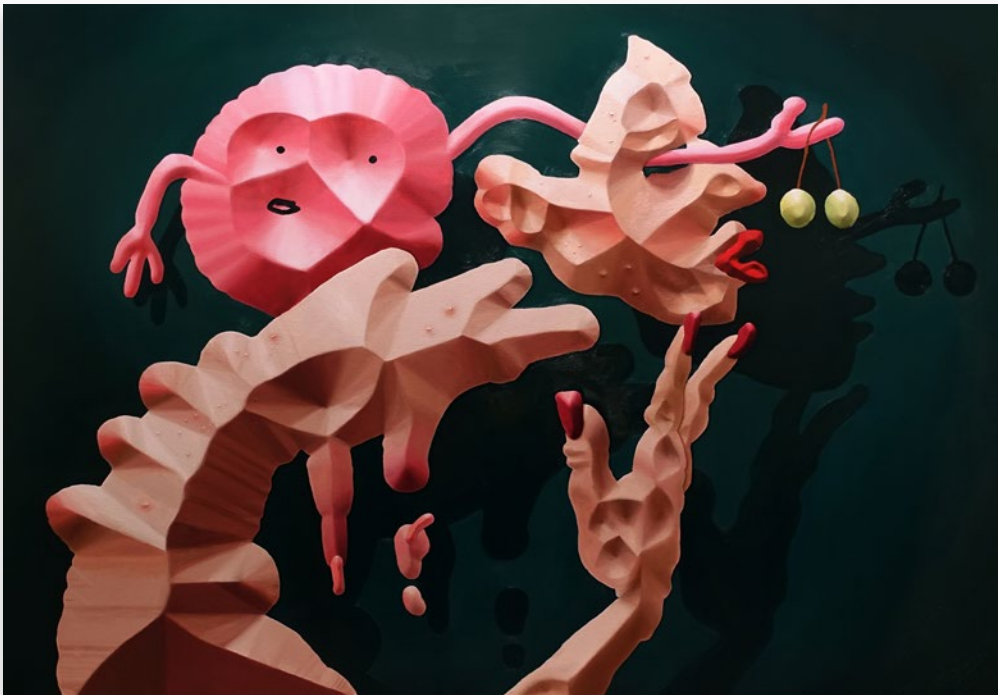
Stattdessen führen sie – ganz unterschiedlich in ihrer Art – originelle Methoden und Sichtweisen ihrer Generation vor Augen. Die Oberfläche von Alvarez' Objekten – auf den ersten Blick gleichen sie Gefäßen, Turbinen oder Rohren – erinnert an aufgegangenen Teig. Dickflüssige, keramische Masse presst Alvarez durch eine Druck-Maschine, die er selber konstruiert hat. Den nur kurze Zeit zähfließenden Stoff formt der Bildhauer dann zu halbrunden Gebilden, Trichtern oder Gefäßen. Der Zufall bestimmt die Grundform, die die Maschine herauspresst. Der Künstler kontrolliert dann die Form. Ein Wechselspiel, das zu ästhetischen Objekten und zu einer harmonischen Ruhe im Raum führt. Letzterem dient auch die Farbpalette: Sie reicht von Yves-Klein-Blau, Orange bis zu Anthrazit.

Und die Bilder? Ästhetisch wirken die Gestalten mit bizarren, teilweise surreal aufgedunsenen Gesichtern, mit schachtelförmigen Fangarmen und plastisch hervorgehobenen Fingernägeln. Aufgebläht zum Ballon oder zu organischen Formen. Beim ersten Blick auf die Ölgemälde in leuchtenden Farben denkt man: Diese Fantasie-Gebilde könnten am Computer entstanden sein, mit einem ausgetüftelten Bildbearbeitungs-Programm. Tatsächlich: Cathrin Hoffmann, von Hause aus Kommunikations-Designerin und Kunst-Autodidaktin, hat ihre digitalen Fabelwesen mit verschleierte Augen oder halbmondartigen Konterfeis zunächst am PC, entwickelt. „White rabbit“ (weißes Kaninchen), „Der Jäger“, „Haustier 1, 2 und 3“ – die leicht ironischen Titel weisen nicht nur auf virtuelle Wesen, die spielerisch daher kommen, sondern können auch ganz schön in Schauern versetzen. So zum Beispiel ein blaues Monster mit Kugelkopf, Händen vor den Augen und Ernährungs-Halm am Mund. Titel „I'm your new plastic surgery coach“ (Ich bin Euer neuer Coach für plastische Chirurgie). Wer einmal Patienten direkt nach einer Schönheits-Operation mit Ganz-Kopf-Verband gesehen hat, weiß, dass sie nicht selten einem außerirdischen Science-Fiction-Gesellen gleichen.

[https://www.wz.de/nrw/duesseldorf/kultur/kuenstler-und-galerie-in-duesseldorf-unterstuetzen-trinkwasser-projekt\\_aid-44564275](https://www.wz.de/nrw/duesseldorf/kultur/kuenstler-und-galerie-in-duesseldorf-unterstuetzen-trinkwasser-projekt_aid-44564275)



# HI FRUCTOSE



*Post Analog Studio, The Hole*

## The Oil and Acrylic Paintings of Cathrin Hoffmann

*Hi-Fructose*, Andy Smith, May 3, 2019

Cathrin Hoffmann extracts unexpected textures and forms in her oil and acrylic paintings. The surreal forms she creates has often been compared to those created through digital means, yet Hoffman's practice spans multiple medium and approaches. Her latest work is included in The Hole's current group show "Post Analog Studio," which specifically looks at how digital means have changed art.



*Post Analog Studio, The Hole*

“Fearless, she tears of the all-damming wallpaper in front of our inner eye and turns around the filter until the automatic cognition explodes,” Millerntor Gallery says of the artist. “Within the fragments of this leftover reality blossoms a humorous and moreover human parallel dimension. Cathrin Hoffmanns art is not a vain pursuit of artistic Mastery. It is first of all a bold projection surface. Therefore she does not bind herself to one specific technique or medium – her world takes place everywhere.”

<https://hifructose.com/2019/05/03/the-oil-and-acrylic-paintings-of-cathrin-hoffmann/>