

A CURIOUS IMPRINT OF REALITY

MARION FINK &
SEBASTIAN NEEB

Preview: Friday 29 November 2019 (6-8pm)

Exhibition: 30 November – 21 December 2019



(Marion Fink) *She Found Herself Beyond The Molded Structures of the Convenient Crown* (2019), monotype and was pastel on paper, 210x152cm



(Sebastian Neeb) *Jubilee of the old philosopher* (2017) Glazed Ceramic on Wooden and Marble Base, 70x31x31cm

Albert Einstein famously stated that:

“Reality is merely an illusion,
albeit a very persistent one.”

How we perceive the world through our senses is not only highly subjective but often also very inaccurate, – and this inability is one of the many driving sources of inspiration for German artists Marion Fink and Sebastian Neeb, who have separate practices (although both based in Berlin) and will show together here for the first time.

Fink states that her work is a process of “reflecting on my own conscious and unconscious; constructing and defining my reality through the practice of meditation and the study of literature about physics, the paranormal and philosophy.” Neeb takes a philosophical ‘withdrawn’ approach, situating the reality/responsibility to the space created between viewer and artwork: “art is also an observer’s confrontation with an object [...] as to how an artwork is conceived from the moment of confrontation and converted it into a lasting effect.”

For Fink, who works in monotype* figures find themselves in surreal scenarios, sublimely interacting with rudimentary features of our world, like rocks, water concrete or steel constructions. Their motives or supposed ruminations (or perhaps those are meditations belonging to the artist) are scrawled, like ‘automatic writing’* across the painted surface. Fink’s works are personalized studies on her perception of reality, her awareness of space, ideology, and practice as it develops and unfolds around her.

An element of self-awareness, even a slight autobiographical uncertainty enters Fink’s philosophical and artistic process when we realize these protagonists seem unwitting pawns – their look and postures are culled from magazines or social media portrayals of the artist’s *thirtysomething* generation. As a result, the figures feel somehow lost, immersed in stillness, searching or silently wondering – often directly looking back to the viewer to exaggerate the silent disquietude of the work. Is it her? As a sort of spiritual doppelgänger, the figures are both her, and *not her* – a stand-in for both the artist and her generation as a whole. Titles, often plucked from her readings, can simultaneously offer perspective – or further confusion – into the world of the artist/main character/spiritual archetype.

Fink seems eager to celebrate uncertainty and possibility, even her process of using collaged-monotypes leaves much to chance – where meaning slips in through frays in some sort of cosmic fabric.

Sebastian Neeb’s work, by contrast, carries much of the same sense of philosophy and even absurdity, but grounded with a sense of ... precise structural crudeness? A feeling of paradoxes arises when we consider his work, which are obviously very refined, but levied by their own grotesque and tongue-in-cheek nature to use humor as the operative method to question various human processes. Once we ‘buy into’ the world he is constructing, his works quickly derive their own quirky internal logic.

His series of gilded ceramic trophies are intended for use as awards for nonsensical, pointless achievements. With titles such as ‘Trophy for Being Where Everyone Else Is’ (2017), and ‘Trophy for Pulling Faces in Front of the Mirror’ (2017), the series highlights the idea that awarding the awarding of a trophy is a precarious action that offers no value in and of itself, only serving to highlight the need for frequent material reassurance for ‘achievements’ that hold no real significance.

The characters depicted in the trophies are visually grotesque and Goya-esque in their appearance. Made from ceramic and thereafter glazed or gilded to appear gold or bronze – their transformation from “damp earth [to] end up looking like a lump of gold claiming a material value is part of their illusion.” He states. Furthermore, the play this process suggests for the object’s value and history becomes entwined in our reading of the work. Their visceral chunkiness, playfulness, and sometime silliness is betrayed only by their elegant construction, through a collage of various fine and semi-fine materials, from gold, to marble or myriad rare woods, sandwiched into elegant altar-like stacks, adding to their subversive nature. Further, the fact that these ‘trophies’ are often presented as mobile structures, suggests our ability to ‘interact’ with them, morphing and twisting and touching them – which seems in direct contrast to art-world edicts that prohibit touching art at any time (although we strongly advise you not to touch the works, gloves will be provided if you feel you absolutely must).

It appears that while Fink questions, Neeb wants to tease – but both processes leave viewers with questions about their own space and value in an absurd and overwhelming world.

*A note on Fink’s technique is relevant: for hundreds of years, the *monotype* has been used for making quick color sketches in usually a pretty small format. The paint is applied on a smooth surface and then pressed upon a paper – the result of this technique is a single original, which cannot be redone. Since 2016, Fink has developed and refined this technique; the artist (both mentally and literally) disassembles the various parts (read: motives) of her paintings in order to paint each of them separately – one after the other – on a flexible mylar sheet and print them using the plain force of her own body. Like this, the artist is also actively making a type of collage, adding to the overall composition with each print. This process separates and articulates the process necessary to paint, print and clean the mylar again to reuse it for the successive process; an elaborate method that enables sharp lines and clear distinctions between colors, forms, and brushstrokes – and similarly speaks to the construction of narrative and imagery. The resulting prints are unusual in their actual appearance and always contain an element of surprise, and uncertainty, adding to the vulnerable and somewhat dreamlike quality of the resulting product itself and the story evolving therein.

MARION FINK (b. 1987, Lindenberg im Allgaeu, Germany) lives and works in Berlin and Potsdam, Germany. She graduated from the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg in 2016. Solo exhibitions include: *'I am a conversation, which has decided, it exists.'*, Aperto Raum, Berlin, Germany (2019) *'New Work'*, Kunstraum Potsdam c/o Waschhaus, Potsdam, Germany (2017); *'Soliloquy'*, NAU Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden (2014); and *'Sweet Inner Bastard'*, NAU Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden (2012). Recent group exhibitions include *'NUDE – Female Bodies by Female Artists'*, Villa Schöninge, Potsdam, Germany (2019); *'Think in Pictures'*, Amelchenko, New York, USA (2019); *'Offen Vol.2'*, Gallery EIGEN + ART, Berlin, Germany (2018); *'Tangerine Dreams'*, curated by Johann König, Funkhaus, Berlin, Germany (2018). Later this year Marion will be part of the exhibition *'Ping Pong Basel'* during Art Basel in Switzerland, *'On Paper'* at Evelyn Drewes Gallery in Hamburg (Germany), a group exhibition at Rundgänger Gallery in Frankfurt (Germany) and a duo exhibition at C24 Gallery in New York (USA).



SEBASTIAN NEEB [b. 1980 Güstrow) graduated with a Masters from the University of Arts in Berlin in 2009. Solo exhibitions include: *'Waving Back When Being Waved At'*, Kunstverein Ludwigsburg, Ludwigsburg (2019); *'We Just Need Another Hero, Ignore the Circumstances'* REITER Gallery, Berlin (2019); *'The Big Donkey Chase'* Palais für aktuelle Kunst, Kunstverein Glückstadt, Glückstadt (2018); *'Solid Unstable Surface'* Paul Roosen Contemporary, Hamburg (2018) and *'You won't believe what happens next – Manipulation durch Entertainment II'* REITER Leipzig, Leipzig (2017). Group Exhibitions include: *'Fountain of Youth'* Goethe Institut Lille und Galerie La Passerelle der Universität Rouen, Frankreich (2018); *'Knotenpunkt 17'* Affenfaust Galerie, Hamburg (2017) and *'Contemporary Visions VII'* Beers London, London (2017). Neeb currently lives and works in Berlin.

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