



Ende Neu

29 August 2021 – 6 February 2022

Opening: 28 August 2021, 2 – 10 pm

Maschinenhaus M1

Katja Aufleger, Angela de la Cruz, Caterina Gobbi, Bastian Hoffmann, Soshi Matsunobe, Renaud Regnery, Michael Sailstorfer, Nicola Samorì

Hazard prevention, security measures, de-escalation— attempts are usually made to control and prevent destructive forces in the face of political conflicts, environmental disasters, and pandemic developments. However, in art, literature, and philosophy, destruction is seen not primarily as an act with a disastrous end, but also as a potential beginning from which something new can emerge.

The group exhibition *Ende Neu* brings together works by eight international artists in which the phenomenon of destruction is questioned in an astute, poetic, and often humorous way. Inspired by the title of the song *Ende Neu* (1996) by the band Einstürzende Neubauten, the works span the poles of destruction and preservation, transformation and new beginnings. With wanton interventions, they question the principle of cause and effect; they confuse, disrupt, and boycott familiar conditions and processes.

Ende Neu ends and begins with an intervention in the elevator: *Best of Humming* (2013) by **Soshi Matsunobe** (* 1988 in Kumamoto, Japan; lives in Kyoto and Shiga) consists of a sequence of hummed melodies that immediately catch visitors' attention. The artist uses the effect of catchy tunes that unavoidably stick in the mind and are as contagious as yawning. Through the deliberate placement in the elevator, Matsunobe subverts the boundaries of the exhibition space and simultaneously questions the mechanisms of the white cube and its in many respects exclusive system. The elevator, whose function is to transport people and things, becomes a new space of experience in which a break with the familiar takes place.

In the video work *Tränen* (2015) [engl. tears], **Michael Sailstorfer** (* 1979 in Velden, Germany; lives in Berlin) shows the work of systematic destruction. An old house in a rural idyll crumbles loudly under blue tears, which turn out to be heavy wrecking balls that repeatedly hit the building with full force. With the motif of the tear, the artist draws a melancholy picture and places the progressive transformation into a heap of rubble in an almost poetic context that counteracts the brutality of the irrevocable process. The acoustic level is anchored in the here and now, and creates emotional distance: tears purify and free us. These tears create space for new things.

Light-footed, flawless, and extremely dangerous: **Katja Aufleger's** (* 1983 in Oldenburg, Germany; lives in Berlin) works seem like a balancing act between aesthetic form and potential destructive power, and point to fragile networks of relationships.

GUILTY (2021) features a beguiling scent from bottles arranged like in a still life. Then the visitor notices the manipulation with the attached cloth and lighters: the luxury perfume suddenly becomes a Molotov cocktail, just one throw away from disaster.

NEWTON'S CRADLE (2013 / 2020) is modelled after a steel ball pendulum of the same name, which illustrates the physical principle of conservation of momentum and is thought to aid concentration due to the meditative clacking of the colliding balls. Here, however, the logical sequence of cause and effect falls out of rhythm. The glass flasks are filled with the components of nitro-glycerine, and mixing them would result in a devastating detonation. The explosive mixture occurs in the viewer's imagination.

Nicola Samorì's (* 1977 in Forlì, Italy; lives in Bagnacavallo) works in chiaroscuro painting seem somewhat anachronistic. Executed in the style of the Italian Baroque (17th century), their connection to the painting of old masters such as Caravaggio and Guido Reni is immediately apparent. At the same time, Samorì side-steps this legacy of painting by violently attacking the allegorically loaded figures with a knife, scalpel, or paint thinner. He meticulously scratches, scrapes, and etches away the centre of the painting, smears traces of legibility, and presents the destruction as a powerful, sweeping gesture, thus establishing his own visual language.

Broken and precariously balancing pieces of wardrobes are stacked in front of the wall. *Clutter Wardrobes* (2004) by **Angela de la Cruz** (* 1965 in La Coruña, Spain; lives in London) is a composition of disorder which, like discarded furniture casually piled on the side of the road, seems to have struck a balance between destructive frenzy and the will to preserve. In the proportions of the work, the artist refers to the human body, its fragility and limitations. Anthropomorphic traits are also embodied in *Self* (1997), an installation composed of an object and two paintings: the deformed painting sitting on the chair, deprived of its function, looks at its intact likeness and makes us superfluous as objective viewers.

Despite the enormous resistance, the sculptural installation *I want you* (2021), which **Michael Sailstorfer** produced especially for *Ende Neu*, drills its way through the wall. The demonstration of power inherent in this aggressive act is also reflected in the motif of the drill bit: the hand with an extended index finger recalls the famous United States military recruitment poster in which Uncle Sam declares "I want you for U.S. Army". Tying in with his earlier work *Freedom Fries* (2013), Sailstorfer once again uses a strong symbol that questions the concept of freedom in the context of military intervention and confronts the viewer with an unmistakable gesture.

With the series *Today I want to show you ...*, since 2012 **Bastian Hoffmann** (* 1983 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany; lives in Cologne) has been publishing videos in which he takes up the online format of the tutorial and parodies it in bizarre projects.

In *how to turn your work place into a sheet of paper* (2018), for example, he illustrates the process of making paper out of objects such as chairs and desks, including the items lying on them, which he shreds, mashes, and purees. With this humorous and absurd action, Hoffmann addresses media-critical aspects such as self-presentation and the widespread sharing of content on the Internet. At the same time, he reflects on artistic production and tutorials as a conceptual strategy.

The almost nine-meter-long sculpture, which imitates the materiality of a brick wall and unites a vertically standing and a horizontally lying shape in its rotation, overcomes its inherent contradictions. As an element of limitation in Hoffmann's work, the wall becomes a temporary blockade that demands a reorientation in space.

Renaud Regnery's (* 1976 in Épinal, France; lives in Berlin) large-scale pictures from the *Half Moon Paintings* series (2014) show visual distillations of the repeating motif taken from the pattern of the *Half Moon* wallpaper. The wallpaper itself is a reproduction of an Art Deco wallpaper from the 1920s. Using various analogue and digital printing techniques, the artist gradually works his way through the pattern, reacting to it with painterly gestures, by bleaching, grinding, and applying pulverised iron or industrial paint. Wallpaper and its cultural (de)coding as a mass-produced product of its time play an elementary role in Regnery's works as a means of

asking fundamental questions about painting, its possibilities and conditions, as well as uniting the simultaneity of preservation and destruction of forms in the inseparable layers.

With the sound installation *Monuments to a melting voice or the story of a lover that turned into a flower* (2020 / 2021), **Caterina Gobbi** (* 1988 in Geneva, Switzerland; lives in Braunschweig and Italy) presents a quiet soundtrack on climate change recorded on the Mont Blanc glacier, composed of the gradually fading sounds of dripping icicles, the creaking that precedes the breakup of the glacier, and the meltwater running under the ice. The musical composition seems like the diffuse depiction of an abstract danger that in reality is a very real threat. The apocalypse at the end? Not quite: the edelweiss depicted on the resonant bodies refers to a love story from an Italian collection of legends and is also a symbol of the luck and courage of those who dare to climb mountains.

Curated by Magdalena Mai and Manuel Kirsch

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