

Exhibition FACELESS part I Opens at MuseumsQuartier Wien

The exhibition "FACELESS part I", opening at freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL/MQ on July 3 at 19:00, presents contemporary works from the worlds of art and fashion in which faces are hidden, transformed, or masked. In addition to some one hundred works by artists including Marina Abramović, Thorsten Brinkmann, Asger Carlsen, Shahram Entekhabi, David Haines, Ren Hang, Ute Klein, Nienke Klunder, Manu Luksch, Slava Mogutin, Mustafa Sabbagh, Jan Stradtman, and Levi van Veluw, the show features masks by designers like Maison Martin Margiela, Jun Takahashi for UNDERCOVER, and Katsuya Kamo for Junya Watanabe's COMME des GARÇONS.

For artist Bogomir Doring (SRB/NED), curator of the exhibition together with Brigitte Felderer from the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the exhibition was chiefly inspired by the sociopolitical consequences of 9/11. As the value of facial identifiability has risen, abstracted forms and representations of faces have become increasingly common in artistic production. Bogomir Doring, for one, has been exploring the theme of facelessness in fashion and art for years. "Our unstable identity yearns for a return to the mask," he says. "Like in times past, we are attracted to wearing masks as a form of protection or camouflage, as a prop, or just for entertainment."

"The grotesque faces the media bombards us with not only affect our sense of self, not only confront us with unequal reflections, but also ensnare us in excessive self-control," says Brigitte Felderer. "They have long since left marks that are indelibly engraved in the almighty web. Eternalized in the book of faces, we become findable, identifiable. Ultimately, all our projections and desires are revealed, and worse yet are divulged to entities of control both legal and secret. We emerge and can never disappear from view again. 'FACELESS' explores the various strategies and projects of revolt and self-empowerment in the face of these overpowering standards we can never satisfy."

German artist Thorsten Brinkmann is always faceless in his self-portraits. For his photographs, which in color, pose, and composition are reminiscent of classic portrait painting, he puts together used everyday objects, discarded furniture, and household detritus as *objets trouvés*.

Conversely, a public persona like Marina Abramović attempts to relativize her high recognition value in photographic self-portraits. Frank Schallmaier makes collages from photos that he finds on social networks and online dating sites for gay men: they show people who present themselves without making their faces in any way recognizable. Hester Scheurwater's photographic works examine the media representation of women as objects of desire. In Ute Klein's photographs the bodies of lovers melt into temporary sculptures. Nienke Klunder's self-portraits parody the trivial omnipresence of erotic images, while Jan Stradtman's photographic works are literally characterized by a loss of face.

In avant-garde fashion, masking has long been a popular device for erasing the individuality of the wearer. "FACELESS" shows mask creations by labels like Maison Martin Margiela, Gareth Pugh, Viktor & Rolf, and Bernhard Willhelm. Plus, for the first time in Austria, works by artist and designer Jun Takahashi for the Japanese fashion label UNDERCOVER will be on view, as will creations by stylist Katsuya Kamo for Junya Watanabe's COMME des GARÇONS.

For the second time, the Department for Stage and Costume Design, Film, and Exhibition Architecture at Mozarteum University in Salzburg is responsible for the exhibition architecture in the baroque space housing freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL/MQ. Under the guidance of Professor Henrik Ahr, students Thilo Ullrich and Martin Hickmann have developed a presentation concept to embed the hundred or so works in an elaborate setting according to topics like burqas, hooligans, sex, fetishes, and mutants.

The exhibition will open on July 3 at 19:00 with performances by Addie Wagenknecht and Stefan Hechenberger, FERAL is KINKY, and REBEL YUTHS. An extensive side program includes film

screenings as part of the frame[o]ut - digital summer screenings, curator tours, an artist talk with Dora Budor, the children's workshop "Digital Mask" with Bernd Oppl in cooperation with the European Youth Forum/Young European Federalists, and Addie Wagenknecht and Stefan Hechenberger's Surveillance Documentation, a project by Artistic Bokeh and the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

The website for the exhibition, www.facelessexhibition.com, will be launched at the end of June. Visitors and artists are invited to upload "faceless" images. Some of the images selected by the curator will be presented in "FACELESS part II". The second part of the exhibition, opening on September 27, is dedicated to the reinvention of the private sphere.

Artists:

Marina Abramović (SRB/USA), Marc Bijl (NED/GER), Thorsten Brinkmann (GER), Ondrej Brody (CZE) & Kristofer Paetau (FIN), Asger Carlsen (DEN/USA), Nezaket Ekici (TUR/GER), Shahram Entekhabi (IRI/GER), Caron Geary aka FERAL is KINKY (GBR), David Haines (GBR/NED), Ren Hang (CHN), Sabi van Hemert (NED), Ursula Hübner (AUT), Damier Johnson aka REBEL YUTHS (NGR/ITA), Brian Kenny (USA), Ute Klein (GER), Nienke Klunder (USA), Manu Luksch (AUT/GBR), Zachari Logan (CAN), Maison Martin Margiela (FRA), Slava Mogutin (RUS/USA), Veljko Onjin (SRB), Bernd Oppl (AUT), Tanja Ostojić (SRB/GER), Gareth Pugh (GBR), Eva-Maria Raab (AUT), Ana Rajcevic (SRB/GBR), Harem Royal (SRB), Tarron Ruiz-Avila (AUS), Viktor & Rolf (NED), Daphne Rosenthal (NED/USA), Mustafa Sabbagh (JOR/ITA), Olivier de Sagazan (FRA), Daniel Sannwald (GER/GBR) for WOODKID, Frank Schallmaier (NED), Hester Scheurwater (NED), Jan Stradtman (GER), Sergei Sviatchenko (UKR/DEN), Jun Takahashi for UNDERCOVER (JAP), Marc Turlan (FRA), Levi van Veluw (NED), Philippe Vogelenzang & Majid Karrouch (NED), Addie Wagenknecht (USA) & Stefan Hechenberger (AUT), Katsuya Kamo for Junya Watanabe COMME des GARÇONS (JAP), and Bernhard Willhelm (GER/FRA). Some of them will live and work at the MQ as Artists-in-Residence.

FACELESS is being organized in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, WIENER STÄDTISCHE Versicherung AG Vienna Insurance Group, the Mozarteum University in Salzburg and the Royal Netherlands Embassy with the support of partners and sponsors from Austria and abroad.

FACELESS part I

Length: Jul 4 to Sep 1, Tue to Sun, 13:00-19:00, free admission

Press preview: Wed, Jul 3, 10:00

Opening: Wed, Jul 3, 19:00

Location: freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL/MuseumsQuartier Wien

www.quartier21.at

www.facelessexhibition.com (launched at the end of June)

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