

Cosima von Bonin

On View December 20, 2019 – February 2, 2020
Opening Reception December 20, 4:00-7:00 PM

On December 20, Marianne Boesky Gallery will open *Cosima von Bonin*, a focused exhibition of eight works by the Cologne-based conceptual artist. Inspired by popular and vernacular culture, movies, fashion, and music, von Bonin examines cultural phenomena and the contradictions and relationships therein. Her multifaceted practice embraces sculpture, photography, textile paintings which she refers to as "Lappen" (translation "rags"), installation, performance, film, video, and music. For the upcoming exhibition, Marianne Boesky Gallery will present works from across a decade of von Bonin's career, capturing the dynamic and open approach that has made von Bonin one of the most influential German artists of her generation. The exhibition will remain on view at the gallery's Aspen location through February 2, 2020.

Von Bonin's work touches upon ideas of identity and self-reflection with both absurdity and humor. This can be seen in her recent marine-themed installations, including *What If It Barks 3 (Black Ukulele Version with Ghost)* (2018), *What If It Barks 4 (Black Ukulele Version)* (2018), and *Au Pairs* (2018)—all of which will be on view in the upcoming presentation. In discussing this work with the *Brooklyn Rail* in 2018, von Bonin said, "I grew up in Kenya by the Indian Ocean...As a kid, I was always a hermit. I think of myself as a hermit crab... One day I walked alone on the beach. I was three years old, and I wore shorts fastened with elastic, and I stuffed everything I found in them—crabs, jelly fish, everything. I never had anything to do with art, it was always the beach and animals, animals, animals. I love strange animals." Inspired in part by the absurdity of Decorator crabs, which will adorn themselves with any material in their environment as a disguise from predators, her sculptures in turn feature large-scale plastic fish accessorized with different objects such as fabric and ukuleles, and sewn, soft crab claws remixed with rockets and torpedoes.

Animals also appeared in von Bonin's earlier works including *Thrown Out of Drama School* (2008). Here, three stuffed animal figures produced in black tweed are suspended from a metal bar along with a loose arrangement of garments. The effect is reminiscent of a child's mobile gone awry. The juxtaposition of joyful and dark undertones, of the familiar versus the obscure, is characteristic of von Bonin's work throughout her career. The exhibition also includes several textile paintings, referred to as *Lappen: Hand von rechts* (2008), *36 Bubbles Loop #03* (2010), *36 Bubbles Loop #11* (2010), and *Nothing #11 (No Way Blasé)* (2010). In these works, von Bonin transforms the seemingly banal material of found fabric into opaque narratives, suggested through cartoon-like hands and obscure text.

In the same interview with the *Brooklyn Rail*, von Bonin said of her work, "Really it's like [artist] Mike Kelley said: "It's somehow a making sense of senseless things— you take this and you take that and in the end it's poetry and it's a piece of art." I don't want to refuse to explain my art, but you can stand in front of a piece of art and say fuck you, or it can break your heart."

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

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Cosima von Bonin (b. 1962, Mombasa, Kenya) lives and works in Cologne. Her work is included in a number of museum collections around the world, including: the Tate Britain in London; the Museum für Neue Kunst im ZKM in Karlsruhe, Germany; the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. Von Bonin's first major U.S. survey, *Roger and Out*, opened in 2007 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Subsequently, she has been the focus of several solo exhibitions, such as *HIPPIES USE SIDE DOOR. THE YEAR 2014 HAS LOST THE PLOT* at MUMOK in Austria (Oct. 2014 – Jan. 2015); *The Fatigue Empire*, presented in 2010 at the Kunsthau Bregenz in Austria, the *Lazy Susan Series, A Rotating Exhibition*, with venues at the Witte de With Rotterdam (Oct. 2010-Jan. 2011); Arnolfini Bristol (Feb.-April 2011); MAMCO, Geneva (June-Sept. 2011); and Museum Ludwig, Cologne (July-Oct. 2011). Her work has also been included in a number of group exhibitions and art events, such as at the Museum of Modern Art in New York; Les Abbatoirs in Toulouse, France; and Documenta XII in Kassel, Germany, among many others.

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For more information on Cosima von Bonin, please contact Gallery Director Kelly Woods at kelly@boeskygallery.com or 212.680.9889. For press inquiries, please contact Alina Sumajin, PAVE Communications and Consulting, at alina@paveconsult.com or 646-369-2050.

boeskygallery.com

telephone 212.680.9889

fax 212.680.9897