# KÖNIG GALERIE

## THE ARTIST IS ONLINE
## PAINTING AND SCULPTURE IN THE POST DIGITAL AGE

18 MARCH – 18 APRIL 2021
ST. AGNES I SALEROOM

KÖNIG presents the international group exhibition THE ARTIST IS ONLINE. PAINTING AND SCULPTURE IN THE POST-DIGITAL AGE curated by Anika Meier and Johann König. In the gallery, around 70 works by are shown by 50 artists who are at home on social media. In the media of painting and sculpture, they react to the mechanisms of the attention economy and to technical innovations. They digitize paintings, visualize data sets and reflect the mobility of images.

Art critic Isabelle Graw writes that today's new found interest in painting – has it ever gone away? – can be explained by internet platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. In her essay "The Value of Liveliness" Graw notes: "I believe that painting is particularly well positioned in such a society because it gives the impression of being in life of the author." After artists have used Instagram to perform over the past ten years, painting now is able to redeem what social media has triggered: the longing for limitless individuality. Which is what it's all about on the screen: the pursuit of individuality and indulging in consumption accompanied by a greed for attention.

For the generation of artists born around 1990, painting in the post-digital age has become a mashup of art-historical references, most evidently, when the styles of the Old Masters, Surrealism, Pop Art and Post-Internet Art are sampled. The result is portraits of people, bodies and animals that lose themselves in pathetic poses.  Femininity is deconstructed (Sarah Slappey, Rosie Gibbens) and masculinity is over-performed (Pascal Möhlmann, Evgen Copi Gorisek). The cult of self-expression is celebrated (Chris Drange) and consumerism is exhibited (Oli Epp, Travis Fish).

While content-related access to painting in the post-digital age is one possibility, formal access via the integration of technology is another. Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence can all be used to digitise painting. Ai-Da is a humanoid robot and an artist who arguably proves that an artificial intelligence can produce a creative achievement. According to her creator, the gallery owner and art dealer Aidan Meller, that means creating works that are new, surprising and have value. She has cameras in her eyes and paints and draws what she sees. Is Ai-Da creative? Is her art good? And is the question of whether her art is good even relevant? The French artist Ben Elliot meanwhile creates PERFECT PAINTINGS generated by software based on data about the most popular contemporary works, while American Gretchen Andrew hacks Google to fulfil her wishes and dreams: a cover story in Artforum, winning the Turner Prize, participating in Art Basel Miami Beach and now an auction record.

Artists: Trey Abdella, Ai-Da, Gretchen Andrew, Daniel Arsham, Banz & Bowinkel, Aram Bartholl, Arno Beck, Lydia Blakeley, Ry David Bradley, Arvida Byström, Damjanski, Stine Deja, Rachel de Joode, Maja Djordjevic, Chris Drange, Johanna Dumet, Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg, Ben Elliot, Oli Epp, Liam Fallon, Travis Fish, Rosie Gibbens, Evgen Copi Gorišek, Cathrin Hoffmann, Andy Kassier, Nik Kosmas, Brandon Lipchik, Jonas Lund, Miao Ying, Pascal Möhlmann, Rose Nestler, Hunter Potter, Grit Richter, Rachel Rossin, Manuel Rossner, David Roth, Aaron Scheer, Pascal Sender, Sarah Slappey, Fabian Treiber, Theo Triantafyllidis, Anne Vieux, Amanda Wall, Fabian Warnsing, Thomas Webb, Jessica Westhafer, Anthony White, Chloe Wise, Hiejin Yoo, Janka Zöller

## SELECTED ARTISTS

Canadian painter Chloe Wise is one of the portraitists of her generation. She paints friends and people around her. "These are people," Wise says, "who defy characterisation. That is why those portrayed are either naked or wearing what we wear today, adidas and Lacoste, for example."

The British artist, Oli Epp, paints using an airbrush beings that lie somewhere between humans, worms and lumps of meat. Baseball cap on your head, cigarette behind your ear, headphones in your ears. In the post-digital age, people are always connected and yet simultaneously isolated from their environment.

Chris Drange does not paint or even portray himself. For him it is about playing with authorship and originality, a process he continues via the medium of painting. Where there is no longer an original, painting also becomes a fake and a copy. Drange selects photos of influencers like Kylie and Kendall Jenner on Instagram and produces a simplified and at the same time precise composition on a computer, which is in turn enlarged 1:1 by a computer in a machine learning factory in Lithuania. This file is used as a blueprint for a painting produced at an oil painting factory in China.

Sarah Slappey is part of a movement of artists who are turning back to surrealism. How is femininity performed for the male gaze? Femininity and sensuality, the grotesque and violent are to the forefront in Slappey's paintings.

Rosie Gibbens, a British performance artist, also deconstructs the idealised image of women. She explores how women are portrayed in the media and advertising. How are women's bodies presented and consumed on Instagram? "I want to become an object, that's why I build machines and make sculptures that are made from parts of my body. I objectify and sexualise myself. Can I thereby empower myself?" asks Gibbens.

The Dutch painter Pascal Möhlmann adores the Old Masters and collaborates with Virgil Abloh, the current artistic director at Louis Vuitton menswear. Möhlmann calls his style 'new beauty with a punk rock attitude' because he turns away from cynicism and irony. He makes use of art history from the image archive and covers, for example, a Descent from the Cross by Rubens and the myth of Narcissus. While Rubens' body of Christ is taken from the cross in tears, Möhlmann takes the pathetic pose to reflect the state of intoxication from searching for the self in the post-digital age.

For Trey Abdella painting becomes a mashed-up collage of film quotes, cartoon characters and consumer goods. In his paintings Abdella celebrates the remix culture of the internet. He works with acrylic paint, airbrush, materials and textures, fusing the analog and the digital when he uses tools from the latter and objects of the former.

As noted, Ai-Da is both a humanoid robot and an artist. A total of fifteen people, including a team at Oxford University, helped Ai-Da develop her artistic skills. When asked what creativity means to her, Ai-Da replies: "I don't experience the meaning of creativity in the same way humans do. I aim to encourage people to think about their futures. These new technologies are powerful and we must be aware of how we use them. If my artwork encourages this reflection, then I should be happy." Her creator Meller explains "Ai-Da's work is valuable to society because she helps us question who we are and where our future is going."

The aforementioned, Gretchen Andrew calls herself a search engine artist and internet imperialist. She creates self-styled vision boards in which she designs her future as an artist. It is about goals, hopes and dreams. Andrew's work takes up the girlish aesthetic that has become known under the rubric 'selfie feminism' in recent years. She works with metadata and search engine optimization (SEO) online, to place her vision boards as the top search results on Google. "I take advantage of the search engine's inability to read wishes. The internet only knows relevance. The machine already gives me what I want for my future. A cover story in Artforum." says Andrew. Although she calls herself a search engine artist, her performative work on the internet actually results in a performance irl (in real life). Everyone who reports on her art and exhibits her art becomes part of this performance and brings her one step closer to her goals.

What will become of the medium of painting in virtual reality? The German artist Manuel Rossner pursues this question in virtual worlds and in real space. He notes "With a controller that forwards the position of my hand in 3D space to the computer, my movements are converted into lines, which in turn become voluminous elements" about his work process. "The objects that result are both sculpture and painting."

A large selection of the works will be on display in the KÖNIG virtual gallery to make the exhibition accessible to the international audience. The app KÖNIG GALERIE can be downloaded from the App Store.

You can download a selection of images here.

# KÖNIG GALERIE

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

CLUBHOUSE

March 22, 9pm CET
KÖNIG TALK x RHIZOME: Curating in the Digital Realm

Guests:
Michael Connor, Rhizome
Hans Ulrich Obrist, Serpentine Galleries
Sabine Himmelsbach, HEK Basel
Christiane Paul, Whitney Museum
Harm van den Dorpel, Left Gallery
Marcela Vieira, aarea.co

Hosts:
Johann König & Anika Meier

Rhizome champions born-digital art and culture through
commissions, exhibitions, digital preservation, and software development.
Founded by artist Mark Tribe as a listserve including some of the first artists
to work online, Rhizome has played an integral role in the history of
contemporary art engaged with digital technologies and the internet.

March 26, 9pm CET
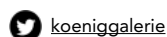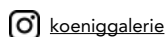KÖNIG TALK: Kick-off KÖNIG DROP

March 29, 9pm CET
KÖNIG TALK: Will NFTs and Digital Art Change the Art Market
Forever?

March 31, tba
KÖNIG TALK: Final Countdown KÖNIG DROP

INSTAGRAM LIVE

March 23 – 30
@koeniggalerie

Daily series of livestreams on Instagram with the artists in the show

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EXHIBITIONS

| AMALIA PICA | KARL HORST HÖDICKE | THE ARTIST IS ONLINE |
|---|---|---|
| Round Table (and other forms) | Kleine Bilder aus Küche und Klo | Painting and Sculpture in the PostDigital Age |
| ST. AGNES I NAVE | ST. AGNES I CHAPEL | ST. AGNES I SALEROOM |
| 27.03 – 25.04.2021 | 18.03 – 18.04.2021 | 18.03 – 18.04.2021 |