

## Meyer Riegger

### Ján Mančuška

16.03. – 13.04.2013

The work of Ján Mančuška revolves around the experience of narration within space and the reading of spatial structures: reading occurring with, in and through bodies, which become vehicles for metaphors in his films, photographs, photographically documented performances, (text) installations and images. The exhibitions at Meyer Riegger, Berlin and Andrew Kreps, New York are the first two solo shows since Ján Mančuška's death in 2011. Five works are presented in these exhibitions, four of them at Meyer Riegger in Berlin.

The piece "The Other (I asked my wife to blacken all parts of my body that I cannot see...)" shows the course of a performance on 15 film strips hanging from the ceiling in front of an illuminated wall, captured in sequential freeze frames: A woman paints all of the parts of a naked man's body that he cannot see. All of the black-and-white positives show the same person in different poses with colour fields on his body.

The situation appears to be intimate, and yet it is determined by a schematic process. The paint application is consummated according to the movement of the eye: each trace on the body is a reaction to the non-vision of the man being painted on; the blind spot becomes a space marked in black - manifested in layers of paint. What remains visible are the "white" marks of the unaffected skin. It presents itself: a body-image of fragments, whereby the participant emerges as a mask, a phantom of himself. But while the painted man sees only his unpainted body parts, the body of the man presents itself to the observer as a nexus of facets. The oscillating, doubled view becomes evident here, particularly for the viewer. For the painted man it is the alienated perception of self, divested of any habituality through the gaze into the mirror as an act of self-definition and self-(re)cognition, which emphasises what remains visible of the exterior (as "other") in the moment of self-reference.

Narration, effected in sequences and implying discontinuity as an instant of comprehension - or loss of consciousness - becomes a theme in a similar way in Ján Mančuška's video projection "Double". It shows a cinematic form of his conceptual handling of language, in which he refers to dubbing. A film within a film is shown, in which the levels of the medium coincide with the overlapping language of the two speaking protagonists. The man projected in the film as a film tells the same story as the man who looks directly at the viewer through the camera. Thus the effect of "mise-en-abyme" draws through the picture and the articulated language, but also through the narration as such, which turns to the viewer of the film as a counterpart: The audible voice drunkenly questions himself and the viewer about sense and nonsense and the repetition of acts, taking up the moment of déjà-vu itself, and the situation of a loss of (cor)relation that the doubling of a personality - in the querying and awareness of a second person - is.

The projection of the own/inherent body becomes concrete using the example of an object that shows an image of itself in Mančuška's "Bulb". A lightbulb that is painted black, translucent only in one segment of its glass body, casts its own image as a slide projection onto the opposing wall by means of a series of prisms. The installation works like the light pattern of a camera obscura, which does not record, but sketches the moment of a picture as a projection. In addition, it also raises questions regarding original and depiction, about actual existence and illusion.

A large number of Ján Mančuška's pieces have their origin in an engagement with the medium film. Time and again, Mančuška examined the cinematic image, its actual ability to portray, its message, construction, content and form. The work "The Painting of Vol. VII" builds on this: On a canvas with the magnified structure of a film strip painted on it, Mančuška placed a cellophane-like layer, which not only inscribes material levels on the painting, but also portrays the fragile, fleeting moment of observation captured in an image through the viewer's reflection: a way of looking that also always shows - and conceals - a trace of ourselves, and lends it expression as a narrative within the fabric of image, time and space.