

JÜRGEN KLAUKE
Schattenfresser

Vienna

Jun 04 – Sep 09 2023
Opening Jun 03, 11:00

We are pleased to invite you to the fifth gallery exhibition with the German photo artist Jürgen Klauke.

Schattenfresser is the title of a three-part photographic work by Klauke from the series PROSECURITAS ("for security"), in which the artist created works in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the help of a luggage scanner. The exhibition presents excerpts from this creative period with new drawings from the *Kreuz&Queer* cycle, created in 2023.

The title work - in black, grey-blue and white - shows the outlines of an increasingly large figure and objects in different colour intensities on three rectangular fields. These are partly identifiable as wheels, frames, wires and an almost dissolving chair. On the left tableau, still presented in clear contrast between dark and light, it is recognisable on the far right that this is not a staged shadow play but a "collage of X-ray photographs".

"Klauke >programmess< his pictures by arranging a wide variety of objects (and sometimes even himself) in suitcase shafts, as they are commonly used at airports. ... Klauke controls the X-ray image on the surveillance screen and also intervenes to a certain extent. He makes changes to the grid or manipulates the positive and negative; he can also make the objects being x-rayed almost unrecognisable. Due to his rich experience in dealing with this medium, he succeeds in creating distortions of perspective by deliberately arranging the individual objects. The knowledge of the behaviour of bodies of different density when illuminated and the knowledge of the resulting light and shadow effects on the control screen enable a predisposing order of things in the body. Klauke then photographs the image obtained in each case from the monitor. The further processing of the images obtained in this way takes place at the light table and in the photo lab. Colours are generated by printing over the black and white negative, solarisation, sandwich overlays or several negatives layered on top of each other then lead to the final result."¹

In works such as *Schattenfresser* (1988-1991), *Selbstfindung* (1988-1991), *Schlafstörung* (1989) and *Toter Fotograf* (1988-1993), Klauke deals not only with themes such as death, human transience and alienation but also (still) with current issues such as the questioning of reality and truth. A phenomenon that, on the one hand, must be understood in the form of critical thinking as the most fundamental human practice in our society and, at the same time, can be observed as an absolute striving for knowledge and certainty to an absurd degree. A deconstructive moment is also inherent in the drawings from the cycle *Kreuz&Queer*, which were created in the spring of 2023 on Tenerife.

These paper works (started in 2021) are dominated by the use of black ink and a strong light-dark contrast. Incorporated into rectangular areas that are fully filled or left blank, simple lines form naked figures with bald heads whose sexual organs and body parts fragment into organic abstract forms. Klauke's suggestive works on paper present the human body as a transformed object. Complex scenes seem to be erotically charged without sexual acts being visible. Instead, they show metamorphoses of the sexual.

1 Cf. Herzog, Den Tod bewegen und das Leben gefrieren, in: Jürgen Klauke, Prosecuritas, Cat. Exhibit. Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Hatje Cantz, 1994, p. 14.

Jürgen Klauke (born 1943) is a singular phenomenon in contemporary art. Above all, he has paved the way for staged photography by conceptually elevating the photographic medium to the immanent theme of his art. More emphatically and radically than others, he raised the question of gender difference and exaggerated the problem of identity to excess with sometimes provocative images. He himself speaks of the "aestheticisation of the existential".

Klauke has lived in Cologne since 1968 and taught at the Academy of Media Arts there from 1994 to 2008. His works have been presented in numerous exhibitions worldwide, for example in the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Max Ernst Museum, Brühl; the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn; the Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Museum der Moderne, Salzburg; The Museum of Modern Art Saitama, Japan; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg and the Tate Liverpool. Klauke's works are represented in the collections of international institutions, including the Nationalgalerie, Berlin, the Kunstsammlung NRW/K21, Düsseldorf, the Kunstmuseum Bonn, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, the Kunstmuseum Bern, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and many more.