

## MEYER RIEGGER

Eva Kotátková  
They Are Coming  
26.04.-08.06.2013

The configuration of the human body as well as its external influences coming from institutions and other social structures are recurrent subjects in Eva Kotátková's work. The artist examines approaches to internal and external formulations of corporeality and what we perceive as belonging to the body – its boundaries and externalisations; and then again the incompleteness, the discontinuity between inside and outside, with the question: What makes us be and feel human? What structures and systems prevent us from doing so? And what makes us who we are – without fictitious or concrete restrictions? The potential of self-expression is one aspect which offers an answer to Kotátková's artistic considerations. In the media of drawing, photography, collage, objects, installation and live performance, the artist investigates exemplary situations of mental and physical restriction, often following a systematic line of thought, as well as – conversely – the potential of individual articulation. The organic self-conception of the corporeal is a theme of her work, as is the depiction of the body as a prosthesis, a fragment. Eva Kotátková embeds her point of view in a structure based on the emphasis of outlines as a synonym for in- and exclusion: as gesture of openness and reticence, as a demarcation between inside and outside, as an inscription between figure and space.

Eva Kotátková focuses on alternative methods of communication in her works, which are expressed non-verbally in the manifestation of movement, sound, pantomime and sign language. In her current exhibition, "They Are Coming" (the title is a reference to the eponymous theatrical synthesis by F.T. Marinetti from 1915, in which objects appear as the main actors in a performance), at Meyer Riegger Berlin, the artist has draped a black curtain across the display window of the gallery. The cloth is cut in some places, making room for different body parts to penetrate the curtain. What is visible through the display window – which now functions as a stage – are exclusively isolated body parts of the performers, which articulate themselves gesturally and associatively, entering into dialogue with one another nearly intuitively.

Kotátková's installation overrides the hierarchy between object, representation and individual by producing possibilities of the development of free forms of expression, against all external limitation, not based on any prototype; instead they develop purely out of the gestures of the protagonist. With this the artist produces an environment, which exists in equal measure as a stage and a place of quiet observation, even a space of vision (in the sense of imagination). The exhibition draws on Kotátková's series *Theatre of Speaking Objects*, which is based on the concept of role play. In her new installation at Meyer Riegger, objects set up on a chessboard-like area in the front gallery room function as a silent database of props. The black silhouettes, marked with white lines, appear to be props for an action yet to be performed, which Kotátková addresses in a related video piece. She shows drawings of precisely such objects as those arranged in the room, and silhouette-like shapes, conjoined and interacting with humans. The video was shot with the classic "black theatre" technique, in which performers conceal their body with black cloth, so that only parts, excerpts of their body are visible. The narration of the film relates the inner life of the featured characters (psychiatric patients); isolation, dependency or the forestalled ability to communicate (freely).

The artist juxtaposes the video with an installation involving a staircase, which serves as a stage for performers in the course of the exhibition. Through repeatedly ascending and falling down the stairs, and a mimesis of the steps by the actors, the staircase is activated as an object, set in relation to the human body and the constant repetition of the body's (schematic) actions.

Viewing human beings as prostheses, or as an illustration of themselves finally also becomes the theme of the corresponding drawings and photographic collages by the artist. A systematic aspect takes shape in Kotátková's work through repetition and serialisation, but also in the alteration thereof. Here, Kotátková makes use of the medium photography, expanding it into collage by cutting it apart or inserting drawings, and sketching an outline of corporeal and mental human organisation. Formulations of the body are marked, suggested, limited or opened by lines. One piece shows an acrobat, coerced – or choosing – to twist around himself and the shapes and objects surrounding him. He becomes an allegory for the questions Eva Kotátková poses regarding the conception and formulation of self – always in pursuit of the issue: not *how* do we act, but *by what* are we moved or determined in our actions?

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