

**Exhibition** **Josephine Meckseper**  
*Babysäbelzahn Tigervollkaskoversicherungsantragsstellungsurkunde*  
13. September – 15. November 2024

**Opening** Friday, 13. September 2024, 6 – 9 p.m.

**Opening Hours** Tuesday – Friday: 1 – 6 p.m. and by appointment.

Josephine Meckseper is a New York City based artist, known for her large-scale installations and films that challenge the conventional reading of familiar cultural imagery and the systems of circulation and display. Her work, which encompasses a variety of media—simultaneously exposes and encases signifiers such as art historical references and everyday objects, to form an investigation into the collective unconscious of our time.

"In Hans Christian Andersen's story "The Shadow" (1847), a learned man's shadow departs from him and takes on a life of its own, later returning to the poor writer as the more successful of the two and eventually superseding his identity. By the end of the tale, the artist is summarily executed through the connivance of the shadow.

The narrative in Josephine Meckseper's show is less linear, more an acute hallucination compressed into flashes and each piece a cinematic drop frame. Its curious title obeys a rule of German which allows you to do things like collage words into a snake of nouns; nobody can object. In English, the lineup would be something like "Babysäbelzahn Tigervollkaskoversicherungsantragsstellungsurkunde." Translated another way, it's a shorthand for how she thinks, writes, and weaves her "web of connections between speculative finance, politics, economy and war."<sup>1</sup> It's always one thing after another. Like these works, arranged in a spiderweb of precision.

Amidst the new paintings, sculptures, and Meckseper's characteristic displays of the materials and strategies of *display* itself is a headless mannequin cradling an abstract painting. Mannequins, which are like shadows of bodies, are an ongoing motif of the artist's work whether holding aloft signs or appearing dressed up (and down) as they are in the retail window. The mannequin here proffers a canvas—or is it the model of painting, "painting beside itself,"<sup>2</sup> a capsule collection of history?—as drained of color as its own body. We might wonder what kind of bargain this is, perhaps another "GOING OUT OF BUSINESS SALE" as in Meckseper's important sculptural installation *Ten High* (2008).

What if the artistic figure, even ideal author, of the show was this beheaded mannequin holding court amongst digitally printed, stenciled, and, yes, painted paintings of snaking cords, nebulous bottles or fossils, and ambiguously desirable debris? Ernst Jünger's ca. 1938 theorization of a worker was a person mobilized for and by war, whose face would become metallic, like galvanized steel, but what of the worker without a face, nor a head? We might call that a shadow of an artist.

Does the mannequin's missing face make them any *less* relatable than the model from a ca. 2000s Jil Sander advertisement with their UV-ink face double-printed like currency, exhibited just adjacent? The window to the soul seems left out of the reproduction; consider them an object, or a shadow—who would object? We've been told to recycle; ergo Meckseper, again, is following the rules whether by reworking commercial images or collaging scans of flattened aluminum cans over textures of shredded paper and plywood product (a compression of wooden shreds). Their altogether rich resolution as an image is a dry joke—it's compressed recyclables whether JPEG or TIFF. Even the bright, biomorphic paintings are made using stencils Meckseper found in the bin—the mannequin worker/model could relate" (text: Paige K. Bradley).

**Meckseper's** works have been featured in numerous solo museum exhibitions worldwide, including the Lewis Center of the Arts, Princeton University, Princeton (2024); the Frac des Pays de la Loire, Nantes (2019); the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2009); the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis (2009); and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2008); and the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2007). Her works are in the permanent collections of major institutions, including the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; the Museum of Modern Art; and the Metropolitan Museum. Meckseper was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and a Visiting Fellowship at Princeton University in 2022.

We cordially invite you to our opening on **Friday, September 13, 2024, from 6 to 9 p.m.**

<sup>1</sup> Sylvère Lotringer, "Crashing," *Josephine Meckseper*. Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> David Joselit, "Painting Beside Itself," *OCTOBER* 130, Fall 2009, pp. 125-134.