

# Capitain Petzel

PETER PILLER  
Bereitschaftsgrad

September 18 – Oktober 31, 2015  
Opening: Friday, September 18, 6 – 8.30pm

“Women posing, and women caught in the act; women self-consciously facing the camera, and women as the unwitting objects of the mass media’s machinic gaze; absent women, whose empty quarters return our frustrated stares: all variations on the demonic dance of seeing and being seen (...).”

(Dieter Roelstraete, Piller Porn: Notes on Digital Schaulust, in: “Archiv Peter Piller: Materials (G),” Albedo, p. 30)

Capitain Petzel is pleased to present its second solo exhibition by Peter Piller. For *Bereitschaftsgrad* he has produced three new groups of works in which he continues to pursue his focus on the female form as an object of visual desire. While Piller’s earlier works had examined women posing in digital media, he now finds them in the analogue lifeworld.

The works of the series *Bereitschaftsgrad*, which has provided the exhibition with its name, build on the group of 30 works *Umschläge* from 2011-12. There Peter Piller had taken covers from over 20 years (from the 1960s to the 1980s) of the East German military’s magazine *Armeerundschau* and analyzed them, isolated them, removed their text and transformed them into two-part images to be hung on a wall; in *Bereitschaftsgrad* he has now applied this principle to the pages inside the magazine. Through the texts’ absence, the juxtaposed motifs of women and soldiers in different situations enter into a dialogue, thus creating a new connection in a playful manner.

Shifts of context through the removal of textual elements can also be recognized in the large-format works of the series *Erscheinungen*. Peter Piller found these relatively rare semi-trailer trucks featuring advertising photographs of posing women during countless trips by car between Hamburg and Leipzig, and he photographed them at rest stops and gas stations. He has removed the typographical elements from the back ends of these semi-trailers and left only the motif of the woman, now seen outside any context. Without the advertising slogans accompanying them, the women seem lost and out of place.

In the two series *Unterschriften #1* and *Unterschriften #2*, Peter Piller inverts the relationship between text and image and their absence. The signature motifs were taken from various *Playboy* centerfolds and then adjusted to fit their characteristic format. As a poster providing a detachable image of the given playmate of the month, these are the heart of each *Playboy* magazine. The playmates have been replaced by their signatures and, although the actual subjects of the series are obviously missing, they are personalized through the distinctiveness of their autographs. At the same time they are neutralized through their removal from the originally sexually charged context.

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The *Archiv Peter Piller* consists largely of images from German regional newspapers and contains over 100 groups of collected images that reflect Piller's original search for the unintentional aesthetic and noteworthy image in a thematically complex manner. The artist has been working on this archive since 1998: it deals with the reinterpretation and the re-presentation of images and image archives previously published in other contexts.

In his artistic work to date he has also utilized — in addition to the images from regional newspapers — the photographs of a commercial aerial photography archive, others from the Internet or those left behind by a defunct Dutch factory newspaper as well as a Swiss insurance group's photographic documents related to damage claims.

Peter Piller subsequently transfers this diverse material into his own ordering systems, which he then gives found or invented titles. His sets of drawings (*Bürozeichnungen*, *Peripheriewanderungen*) and his numerous art books are further important aspects of his oeuvre. With precise observation and subtle humor, Piller reflects upon media images' potential and the possibilities and limits of photographic and conceptual art.

Peter Piller (b. 1968) studied at the HFBK Hamburg and has been a professor at the HGB – Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig since 2006.

His awards include the Edwin Scharff-Preis of the Hamburg Ministry of Culture (2011), the Ars-Viva-Förderpreis of the Bund Deutscher Industrie (2004), the Rubens-Förderpreis of the town of Siegen (2003) and the Albert-Renger-Patzsch-Preis of the Dietrich Oppenberg-Stiftung Essen (2003). The extensive solo exhibition *Belegkontrolle* could be visited at the Fotomuseum Winterthur and the Centre de la Photographie Genève in 2014; further stations at the Städtische Galerie Nordhorn and the Kunsthalle Nürnberg have followed this year. Other important solo exhibitions have taken place at the Kunstverein Braunschweig (2011), the Kunstmuseum Bonn (2009), the Kunsthaus Glarus (2007), the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art Rotterdam (2005/06) and the Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen (2003). Peter Piller has published his ten-volume series of artist's books *Archiv Peter Piller* as well as other artist's books and catalogues by Revolver Publishing.

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Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm