

Esther Schipper

CHRISTOPHER ROTH
BLOW OUT
featuring Ver(uschk)a
JANUARY 22 – FEBRUARY 27, 2016

Esther Schipper is pleased to present Christopher Roth's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Entitled *Blow Out*, the exhibition includes a new film with a specially conceived viewing device, a series of wall paintings, a sculptural intervention, a neon work and a new, unfinished novel.

Blow Out constitutes a densely woven web of associations with a cast of characters that includes actresses, architects, film directors, philosophers, and *La Cupola*, a decaying building on the Sardinian coast in a constant temporal displacement.

Cornerstone is the film *Blow Out*, largely shot in the so-called Bini-Shell (after its architect Dante Bini), completed in 1972 for the Italian modernist film director Michelangelo Antonioni who intended to inhabit it with his lover, the actress Monica Vitti. (Bini's innovation allowed the construction of concrete shells hardened around an inflated balloon later removed.) Surtitles have a hypnotic quality but also give the film a loose narrative structure, beginning with its initial direct salutation: "Dear Antonioni...", here doubling as a reference to Roland Barthes' 1980 text on the director's work. Now in a state of disrepair, the building's history—built for a couple that split up before its completion—is evoked as three women appear to visit the site, vanish and reappear. Despite their apparent age difference, there is a distinct likeness between the three female figures, encouraging a temporal slippage: Vitti is shown in an interview from the 1960s, while a woman of similar age looks out from the now-dilapidated building's terrace and wanders through the interior, with its central, erotically charged staircase conceived by Antonioni as a kind of display for his beautiful lover. Adding further temporal layers, the third woman, Vera Lehdorff, appears in three guises: as young actress who, known under her stage name Veruschka, starred in brief but iconic scenes in Antonioni's 1966 *Blow Up*, as herself circa 2015, and as miniaturized 3-D scan wearing the costume from the Antonioni film. Her sole spoken line from *Blow Up*—"I am in Paris"—recurs mantra-like throughout Roth's film and as a new neon work. Another presence will occur online: Lehdorff and Roth's 2015 film *annA+3* starring Lehdorff in the four main roles will be shown on the website where-is-anna.xyz during the exhibition.

Based on the openings in Dante Bini's structure, bright green-screen wall paintings further extend the film's temporal and conceptual conflation into the exhibition space.

Roth's novel *Blow Out* explores Quentin Meillassoux's concept of extro-science fiction (or XSF), a science fiction that imagines an existence in which not all occurrences can be explained by empirically derived, reproducible scientific rules. Partially inspired by René

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Barjavel's 1943 *Ravage*, it depicts a future that tries to adapt to the consequences of the sudden and inexplicable loss of electricity.

While earlier of Christopher Roth's projects, notably *80*81*, with Georg Diez, sought to reconstruct events in the past as evidence of paradigmatic cultural and historical shifts, like his recent feature-length film *Hyperstition* (in collaboration with Armen Avanesian) the new body of work can be located in the dynamic between Meillassoux's theory of a world that exists outside of it's understanding by humanity and J.G. Ballard's dictum from 1971 that "The future is a better key to the present than the past."

For press inquiries please contact our press office David Ulrichs at david@davidulrichs.com.

Christopher Roth was born in Munich.

The artist's œuvre includes feature length-films, theatre projects and novels, notable *200D* and his major research project *80*81* with Georg Diez, consisting of eleven books and accompanied by congresses in Berlin, New Delhi, São Paulo, Johannesburg and theatre performances in Hamburg, New York and Zurich.

His solo and group exhibitions include: *DMZ Docs*, Megabox Kintex, Seoul (2014); *Time Pieces*, Nordstern Videokunsthalle, Gelsenkirchen (2014) and *The New Restraint, Architecture in Straitened Circumstances*, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld (2013).

Selected recent films include: *Hyperstition*, with Armen Avanesian (2015); *annA+3*, with Vera Lehndorff (2015); *AnnA*, with Vera Lehndorff (2015); *Spring*, as part of *The Seasons in Quincy: Four Portraits of John Berger* (2015); *Lacoma* (2007); *Baader*, received the Alfred-Bauer-Prize at Berlinale (2002) and *Mozartbique* in collaboration with Franz von Stauffenberg (2007).

Solo and group exhibitions with Franz von Stauffenberg, as artist duo RothStauffenberg until 2009, include: *Video*, Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles (2009); *Made in Germany*, Sprengel Museum Hannover (2007); *3'*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt/Main (2004); *Neue Welt*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/Main (2001); *Style Games*, Berlin Biennial/congress 3000, Berlin (1998) and *Happier Days*, Filmmuseum, Munich (1994).

Christopher Roth lives and works in Berlin.