

# JULIAN ROSEFELDT

## *Deep Gold*

16.02 – 29.04.2017

*Deep Gold*, (2013-14) is part of the anthology film *The Scorpion's Sting* (2013-14), that was initiated by the artist-duo M+M. Six artists or artist collectives were invited to work on Luis Buñuel's groundbreaking and at the time scandalous film *L'Âge d'Or* (1930). Rosefeldt's part, the B/W film *Deep Gold*, recalls a grotesque version of the 'Golden Age'. It functions as a fictional insert in Buñuel's original movie. The Spanish film-maker used the motif of *amour fou* to criticise the restrictions and conventions of the time: the Catholic Church, the political establishment, the bourgeois morality, the aristocracy... It is the final scene before the epilogue, in particular, that becomes a key moment for Rosefeldt's Project: he interpreted this episode as an early and provocative feminist manifesto.

Taking this understanding as a starting point for *Deep Gold*, his version shows a world full of lust and desire, in which a weak male protagonist becomes overwhelmed by an omnipresent female sexuality. Throughout the film he embodies a symbol of the constrained modern society Buñuel assaulted in the early twentieth century.

Rosefeldt intertwines his references to Buñuel with upto-the-minute news: Richard Wagner's music and a Dalí double encounter topless FEMEN activists, while wall posters with the Occupy-Wall-Street-slogan 'We are the 99%' hint at the parallels between the economic situation of the 1920s and that of today. The aesthetics of the film is akin to the original movie, but the moral and social standards in *Deep Gold* are those of the present: sexual revolution and the feminist movement reached their pinnacle long ago; promiscuity is reality and pornography is overall disposable.

Three of the four photographs were created in the context of film installation *The Ship of Fools* (2007), filmed at the Baroque manor Schloss Sacrow near Potsdam. Built during the Romantic period, Schloss Sacrow was temporarily inhabited by artists such as Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy; during World War II, it was home to a Nazi officer; in the course of Germany's division it was trapped in the death zone of the Berlin Wall and served as a training facility for watchdogs guarding the Berlin Wall, while nowadays it is declared as a World Heritage site and a destination for Sunday strolls. Rosefeldt combines the site – symbolising the metamorphosis and continuity of German national sentiments from the Romantic era (Caspar David Friedrich) through National Socialism, the division of Germany to nowadays. The work is a sceptical epitaph on German sensitivities and on the still problematic dealing with German identity. Characterised by an agitating immobility, the four tableaux vivants in *The Ship of Fools* visualise the risk of stagnation.

[Text summarised from Stefan Berg, Katerina Gregos and Lydia Korndörfer]

The Berlin-based artist Julian Rosefeldt (born in Munich in 1965) is internationally renowned for his visually opulent and meticulously choreographed moving image artworks, mostly presented as complex multi-screen installations. Inspired equally by the histories of film, art and popular culture, Rosefeldt uses familiar cinematic tropes to carry viewers into surreal, theatrical realms, where the rituals of everyday life absorb the inhabitants, employing humour and satire to seduce audiences into familiar worlds made strange.

Rosefeldt's works are showing internationally at museums and film festivals: His recent film work *Manifesto* (2015) was presented in solo exhibitions at the Park Avenue Armory Hall, New York (2016-17), the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2016), the ACMI – Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne (2015) and many more. Past group shows include *Moving Time: Video Art at 50: 1965-2015* at CAFA Art Museum, Beijing (2016), *Wolfsburg Unlimited* at the Kunstmuseum in Wolfsburg (2016), *Zeitgeist: The Art of New Berlin* at the CCBB in Rio de Janeiro (2016) and *Conflict, Time, Photography* at the Tate Modern in London (2014). Collections including his works, amongst others, are Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Saatchi Collection, London, CAC Málaga, Spain and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.