

M+M

Thin Places

30.11.2023 – 10.02.2024

In the exhibition "Thin Places", the artist duo M+M deals with upheavals and crises of recent years, with pandemics and isolation, with social conflicts and personal withdrawal. The new film installations and photo series provide a partly analytical and partly surreal insight into our changing moods and fears. M+M perform a radical change of perspective, either by choosing praying mantises as film protagonists or by macroscopically penetrating the materiality of human surroundings. Places and materials that seem familiar become "thin" or permeable to other worlds.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a suggestive cinema installation with the 3D film "Club Bunker" (2023), which is now being shown for the first time worldwide at the Galería Helga de Alvear.

The macro 3D camera roams through different windowless spaces that oscillate between bunker and club architecture. There one encounters human-sized praying mantises and stick insects with no determinable sex. "Club Bunker" has features of a hallucinatory memory. The elements of techno culture, some of which seem familiar, the partly brutalist scenery and the bizarre anthropomorphic appearance and insect-like behavior of the mantises merge into an irritating dream image.

On the upper floor, the visitor encounters a second stereoscopic film installation: "Mad Mieter" (2019). A praying mantis lives alone in an urban flat in an old building, withdrawn in her own world. The inhabitant moves through the wallpapered hallway, lingers longer in the living room, and reaches for the wall cross in the bedroom. Finally, a second mantid enters the flat unannounced. At first, the two seem to approach each other almost tenderly. But then it comes to an abrupt, cruel end...

In a bizarre way, both films seem to echo a dictum by philosopher Rosi Braidotti: "The post-anthropocentric shift away from the hierarchical relations that had privileged 'Man' requires a form of estrangement and a radical repositioning of the subject."

In the large central space of the gallery, the visitor encounters two new photographic series by the German-Luxembourg artist duo. The photo series "Virendicht" (2022) is presented as a wall-filling installation. In the bright, colorfully nuanced photographs, M+M trace the omnipresence of hygiene materials during the corona pandemic. Upon closer inspection, the almost monochrome-looking images reveal thousands of detailed close-ups of the respective materials, such as FFP2_masks, rubber gloves or Plexiglas panel. Starting with a macroscopic film pan over the corresponding material, all the recorded film stills are successively fanned out into an overall image, i.e., digitally interwoven row by row. The time of the pandemic resonates in the abstract, minimalist images - connected with the experiences of isolation and shutdown.

The second series of works, "tessuti" (Italian for fabrics), was conceived in 2017 during the artists' residency in Venice. The starting point is precious individual fabric samples produced in the Venetian hand weaving mill Bevilacqua. The clients of these fascinating fabrics can be found in the centers of political or religious power such as the White House or the Vatican. In the photographs of M+M, the juxtaposed macro images of these fabrics become oscillating motifs of new magical digital image fabrics.