

curated by

9.9. – 8.10. 2022 Wien
Vienna

Krobath Wien
Klaus Speidel

Artists: Katarina Burin, Jiří Kolář, Jiří Kovanda, Dominik Lang, Lene Lekše, Dita Pepe, Malenkiy Piket

Interference. Traces, Stories, and Ghosts.

“Whether any act of interference is good or bad is a value judgment that could be based logically on the type of interference and the ends for which the interference is conducted.” (Richard W. Cottam, *Competitive Interference and Twentieth Century Diplomacy*, 1967) In a world where “industrialized disinformation” is orchestrated by specialized companies working for governments and at least 70 countries employ cyber troops that spread propaganda, the exhibition *Interference. Traces, Stories, and Ghosts* honors interference as an artistic strategy to pursue progressive goals. As such, its efficiency was first fully recognized by the DADA art movement, which aimed at “disordering the concepts and all the little tropical rains of demoralisation, disorganisation, destruction and collision of sense-making”, as Tristan Tzara put it in 1920. By evoking a feeling of meaning in me, without becoming totally clear, Tzara’s claim disturbs my expectations and thus exemplifies a type of artistic interference. As full-fledged methods of both warfare and artistic troublemaking, interference came to fruition at roughly the same time, in the Cold War period of the 1960s. But while both meddle with truth and reality, they differ fundamentally in their intentions and aims. The often playful acts of artistic interference featured in the show are productive, not destructive. Their driving force is imagination, not following orders. Acting as a spoke in the wheel of the ordinary course of events, including our compulsive scrolling and algorithm-induced acts of “sharing”, they interfere with our ordinary online and offline existences and entice us to pause and reflect. Rather than virality and big numbers, their values are singularity and deceleration. Instead of spreading disinformation, they beget critical thinking. The Positive Interference Lab (PIL) that will first be developed in the framework of the exhibition, is a place where artistic impulse can turn into artful thinking and actions. An abode of active dialogue and community rather than repetition and division, it is a dojo where we can all improve

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our interference jiu-jitsu. Rather than spreading anger, a cult of leadership and the idea that there is only one truth, the show experiments with counter narratives, historical storytelling, national geographies, the history of art, autobiography and joyfully conjuring ghosts. The works in the exhibition are representational without depicting in a traditional sense, and you will find that most of them show symptoms of what Simon O’Sullivan has called “Fictioning”. They are, in this sense, “aimed at creating “a ‘new’ landscape, a new platform for dreaming” where “it is no longer clear where the fiction itself ends and so-called reality begins (or where reality ends and the fiction begins). Fictioning inserts itself into the real in this sense – into the world as-it-is (indeed, it collapses the so-called real and the fictional), but, in so doing, it necessarily changes our reality.“ (O’Sullivan). While the invited artists span several generations and the way their art affects reality differ considerably, their art consciously aims beyond what Didier Eribond has called “the narcissistic contemporary art world”, an intention honored by the Positive Interference Lab, where citizens are invited to develop their own interference strategies.