

curated by

4.9. – 2.10.
2021 Wien
 Vienna

Galerie Meyer Kainer
Zdenek Felix

Artists: George Condo, gelatin, Rachel Harrison, Klára Hosnedlová, Francis Picabia, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Kris Lemsalu, Pieter Schoolwerth, Anna Uddenberg, Franz West

Camouflage

In times of Corona, which can certainly be met with bitter humor, the festival Curated by in September 2021 is dedicated to the topic of Comedy. The exhibition contribution Camouflage at Meyer Kainer gallery takes up certain subversive and ironic aspects of the late work of Francis Picabia and takes them as the starting point for a specific observation of selected contemporary art positions that defy clear definition. However, the show does not aim to get involved in the current modes of comedy culture as they are constantly appearing in various forms in today's media. Wikipedia does not offer a clear definition of the term "camouflage". In general, it means the use of camouflage patterns in military or fashion, if one disregards the fact that some artists such as Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons had already appropriated the deceptive surfaces for the transformation of objects.

The starting point of the exhibition is a painting by Francis Picabia from the 1940s, which despite its comedy, touches with its intensity and depth. The French painter used a black and white photograph as a template for this "portrait of a stranger", which was shown in a popular men's magazine. The transfer into color gives the motif a strange appearance, as Picabia increases the contrast of light and dark areas, whereby the initial realism of the original is evaporated. The result is a pastiche of technical and painterly processes, whereby the ironic intention unmistakably remains. The focus of the process is less an interest in art history than a fascination with ambiguity and camouflage. A work full of irony, yet born of tragedy, sensitivity, and devotion, which ultimately embodies deep seriousness.

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These and other properties of Picabia's image contrast the intention of the theme of Comedy as a genre, as in a similar sense, the other, also artificial and hybrid exhibition contributions in Camouflage, are dedicated to a complex game of subtle contexts. Regardless of how the intentions of the participating artists are influenced by Picabia's strategies, the tension between the two positions remains stimulating for Camouflage. A publication will accompany the exhibition.