

EN //

## RESET III and VIRTUAL REALITY

Curated by Tina Sauerländer ([peer to space](#))

### ARTISTS

Gazira Babeli (IT), Friedemann Banz & Giulia Bowinkel (DE), Dominik Halmer (DE), Carla Mercedes Hihn (ROU/DE), Claudia Larcher (AUT), Patrick Lichty (US/UAE), Judith Sönnicken (DE), The Swan Collective (DE), Tamiko Thiel (JP/DE), Fiona Valentine Thomann (FR/DE) & Alfredo Salazar-Caro's (MEX/US) and William Robertson's (US) *Digital Museum of Digital Art* with the exhibition *Morphé Presence* curated by Helena Acosta (US) and Eileen Isagon Skyers (PH/US), with works by Rosa Menkman (NL/DE), Brenna Murphy (US), Theo Triantafyllidis (GR/US), Miyö Van Stenis (VEN/FR)

**Opening** // Friday, September 8, 2017 at 6pm (Dusseldorf Cologne Gallery Weekend: DC Open)

**Artist Talk** // Friday, September 8, 2017, at 5pm (with Banz & Bowinkel, Dominik Halmer, Carla Mercedes Hihn, Felix Kraus (The Swan Collective), Tamiko Thiel, Fiona Valentine Thomann, moderated by the curator Tina Sauerländer)

**Press conference** // Friday, September 8, 2017, at 4 pm

**Exhibition** // September 9 – October 28, 2017

At PRISKA PASQUER, Albertusstr. 18, 50667 Cologne, Germany

With *Virtual Reality* (VR) a fundamental change is taking place in the digital age. Through the VR glasses people enter a new world instead of only looking at it on a flat screen. The human pursuit of immersion already demonstrated within the chambers of Egyptian pyramids, frescoed rooms of the Renaissance, or huge cinema walls is now seemingly fulfilled by virtual reality. A new era of the virtual space has begun.

The exhibition *RESET III and VIRTUAL REALITY* illuminates the artistic exploration of virtual spaces against the background of the digital age. How do artists create virtual spaces? How do they compare to real environments? How does VR affect the body and perception? The *RESET* exhibition series initiated by PRISKA PASQUER deals with the development of art in the digital age in different artistic media. It examines how artists react to the challenges and possibilities of digital transformation.

Meaning and definition of the virtual space are subject to constant change, and it is entering a new phase with the advent of today's virtual reality technology. A virtual space is not only an illusionary space on a surface but an immersive world, revealed in Virtual Reality (VR). The difference is that with the VR-glasses or Head-Mounted Display (HMD), a person does not look at another world from the outside anymore but is located right in the middle of it. The viewer is the center of the environment and decides where to look or go. He senses proportions and perceives the virtual world three-dimensionally in the round.

The artists presented in the exhibition *RESET III and VIRTUAL REALITY* deal with the production of space in the digital age in various media. This includes the virtual spaces of immersive interactive large-scale projections (Tamiko Thiel), performances and exhibitions in *Second Life* (Gazira Babeli and Patrick Lichty), or augmented reality works that enrich the real space digitally over a screen (Fiona Valentine Thomann). The exploration of virtual spaces in the mirror of the digital also takes place in all other contemporary media, e.g. sculpture (Claudia Larcher), mixed-media wall installations (Carla Mercedes Hihn, Judith Sönnicken) or painting and installation (Dominik Halmer). The exhibition presents VR artworks by Banz & Bowinkel, *The Swan Collective*, Fiona Valentine Thomann as well as the *Digital Museum of Digital Art* by Alfredo Salazar-Caro and William Robertson. It is a virtual reality museum, currently presenting the exhibition *Morphé Presence*, curated by Helena Acosta and Eileen Isagon Skyers, with works by Rosa Menkman, Brenna Murphy, Theo Triantafyllidis and Miyö Van Stenis.

#### **SHORT TEXT ABOUT EACH ARTIST // In alphabetical order**

**Gazira Babeli** (*Second Life*, 2006-2010) was an avatar in *Second Life* (SL) and performance artist there. She dealt with concepts of physicality and identity in the virtual space and was at the same time a work of art and an artist. In her Group Sculpture Performance *Come Together* in SL, naked avatars performed together and their bodies digitally merged. *GAZWORK* (2006/2007) is a video documentary of Gazira Babeli running in the style of Buster Keaton.

The artist duo **Banz & Bowinkel** (Giulia Bowinkel: \*1983 in Düsseldorf, lives and works in Düsseldorf, Friedemann Banz: \*1980 in Mainz, lives and works in Düsseldorf) examines the conditions of materials and substances in the digital space and its relation to physical laws valid on the earth. Their VR experience *Palo Alto* deals with the representation of a virtual reality. It is driven by the notion that the virtual world is not the sphere of simulated reality, but its counterpart, in which the computer subjects the meaning of our society to a new order as an unconscious force.

**Dominik Halmer** (\*1978 in Munich, lives and works in Berlin) questions the individual construction of reality. In his works, the so-called *semi-functional image objects*, different realities interrelate. Poetically, he confronts the classical concept of painting with playful functionality and everyday objects; for example in his series *Semi-Athletics*, he integrates sports equipment.

In her site-specific works, **Carla Mercedes Hihn** (\*1981 in Hermannstadt, Romania, lives and works in Berlin) deals with the nature and through her diaphanous structures. Her collages on transparent substrates such as glass, windows or doors intertwine with the real environment of the place like an analog version of Augmented Reality, changing the light situation and having an effect on the space.

The panoramas by **Claudia Larcher** (\*1979 in Bregenz, lives and works in Vienna) consist of collaged images from architectural magazines, which she brought together and then created a new form out of them with a uniform surface. Standing in a circular *Panorama*, the viewer perceives his environment through this kind of mask, which becomes a kind of analog version of Augmented Reality.

**Patrick Lichty** (\*1962, lives and works in Abu Dhabi, UAE) has been a media “reality” artist, curator, and theorist for over two decades who explores how media and mediation affect our perception of reality. His work centers on the axiom of mediation creating realities. In *Second Life*, his avatar named Man Michinaga performed together with Gazira Babeli. The video *7UP!* includes 12 performances like *Marchmallows (Avatar-Lined Teacup)*, *On The Road Never Again* or *The Hansen-Ono Piano Method 1.0*.

*Migraine Mountains* by **Judith Sönnicken** (\*1981 in Wickede/Ruhr) consists of a mountain landscape originally painted in slow-drying oil, matching the geological, non-human time in which mountains form. The painting was digitally transformed into a red/green 3D version and printed onto two superimposed acrylic glass plates. The green layer is motorized and moves in slow circular motion. The piece references the stereoscopic method used to generate spatial depth by assigning a color to each of the brain’s hemispheres.

The basis for the VR work *NowForeVR* by **The Swan Collective** (founded in 2007) are acrylic paintings, transferred by the artist collective around Felix Kraus (\*1986 in Munich, lives and works in Berlin) into Virtual Reality. There, the viewer can be physically immersed in the architectural spaces and develop a feeling for the depth, size and solidity of the buildings. Since the images determine the surface texture of the virtual architecture, the viewer is exclusively in hand-painted rooms.

In her interactive and immersive installations, **Tamiko Thiel** (\*1957 in Oakland, California, lives and works in Munich) deals with the interplay between place and physicality as well as cultural identity and its historical development. In the interactive installation *The Travels of Mariko Horo*, the user aka Mariko Horo undertakes a fictional journey from Japan to the foreign and exotic West sometime between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> century. During the fantasy journey through time and space, mythological and religious worlds of the different cultures interfere and overlap.

**Fiona Valentine Thomann** (\*1987, lives and works in Colmar, France, and Berlin) creates an augmented reality work called *Tracker*, a digital sculpture, which at first glance looks abstract, but then reveals a variety of references to the current (digital) culture. Accessible by scanning collages of screen captures taken from this digital sculpture, the public can see the sculpture on his or her smartphone screen and change the size of it, move it to a different place and immerse in the inner details. In the corresponding VR experience, *Tracker* can be accessed in the outer space.

The **Digital Museum of Digital Art** by Alfredo Salazar-Caro (\*1989 in Mexico City, lives and works in New York City) and William Robertson (\*1989, lives and works in Chicago) is a virtual museum for *Oculus Rift*. The current exhibition *Morphé Presence* is curated by Helena Acosta (\*1981 in England, lives and works in New York) and Eileen Isagon Skyers (\*1991 in Manila, Philippines, lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) with works by Rosa Menkman (\*1983 in Arnhem, Netherlands, lives and works in Berlin), Brenna Murphy (\*1986 in Edmonds/Washington, lives and works in New York), Theo Triantafyllidis (\*1988 in Athens/Greece, lives and works in Los Angeles) and Miyö Van Stenis (\*1989 in Caracas, Venezuela, lives and works in Paris). *Morphé Presence* points to VR being made of code and not real material, but creating a direct experience by quite literally influencing physical virtues or capabilities. The exhibition indicates the power and failure of technology when attempting to describe or frame reality.

## ABOUT THE CURATOR // TINA SAUERLÄNDER

Director and Curator

[peer to space](#)

Tina Sauerländer is an art historian, curator and writer based in Berlin. She focuses primarily on the impact of the digital and the Internet on individual environments and society. With her label *peer to space* she has been organizing and curating international group exhibitions in various institutions, e.g. *The Unframed World. Virtual Reality as Artistic Medium for the 21st Century* (Basel, 2017), *Layered Landscapes* (Düsseldorf, 2016), *Sometimes You See Your City Differently* (Tel Aviv, 2016), *When The Cat's Away, Abstraction* (Berlin, 2016), *PORN TO PIZZA—Domestic Clichés* (Berlin, 2015). She is the author of many texts on contemporary artists, e.g. Taryn Simon, Alicja Kwade, Gregor Hildebrandt, Carsten Nicolai or Anselm Reyle for *Kritisches Lexikon der Gegenwartskunst*. She contributes to the New York based blog *ArteFuse* about contemporary art exhibitions in Berlin. And she is the founder of the SALOON, a network for women working in the art field in Berlin.

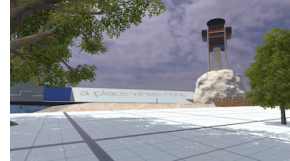
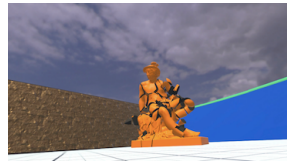
**PRESS IMAGES**

**RESET III AND VIRTUAL REALITY**

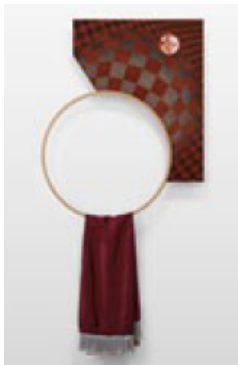
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Tamiko Thiel, Avogadori in the Opal Palace, from: *The Travels of Mariko Horo*, interactive 3D virtual reality projection (monocular large-screen installation), 2006 © Tamiko Thiel, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Banz and Bowinkel, Palo Alto, 2017, artistic VR experience © Banz & Bowinkel, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



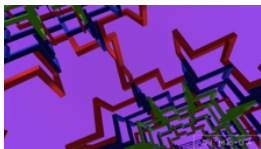
Dominik Halmer, Osten (East), 2017, 210 x 100 x 7 cm, ink, oil, varnish on canvas on MDF, wooden ring, satin fabric © Dominik Halmer, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



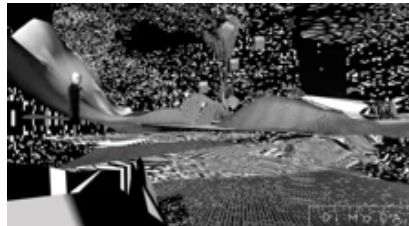
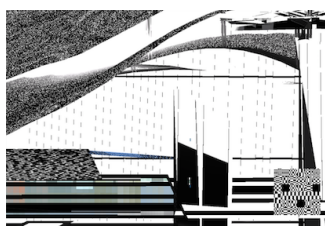
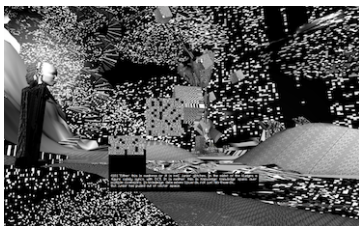
The *Digital Museum of Digital Art* by Alfredo Salazar-Caro and William Robertson,  
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Miyö Van Stenis, from the exhibition *Morphé Presence*, curated by Helena Acosta and Eileen Isagon Skyers as a part of the *Digital Museum of Digital Art* by Alfredo Salazar-Caro and William Robertson, artistic VR experience, 2016 © the artists, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



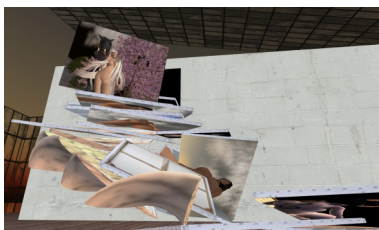
Brenna Murphy, from the exhibition *"Morphé Presence"*, curated by Helena Acosta and Eileen Isagon Skyers as a part of the *"Digital Museum of Digital Art"* by Alfredo Salazar-Caro and William Robertson, artistic VR experience, 2016 © the artists, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Rosa Menkman, DCT:SYPHONING, artistic VR experience, 2016, from the exhibition *"Morphé Presence"*, curated by Helena Acosta and Eileen Isagon Skyers as a part of the *"Digital Museum of Digital Art"* by Alfredo Salazar-Caro and William Robertson © the artists, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Gazira Babeli, *You love Pop Art - Pop Art hates you! - Second Soup*, performances, May 2006 © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Gazira Babeli, *Nudes Descending a Staircase - Monument to Marcel Duchamp*, scripted environment, March 2007, © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne

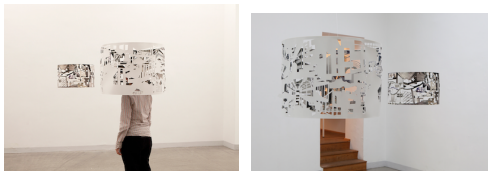




Gazira Babeli, *Ursonate in Second life, Monument to Kurt Schwitters*, scripted environment, September 2007, © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Gazira Babeli and Man Michinaga aka Patrick Lichty, *7UP!*, 12 performances DVD-Video, 2008, Courtesy of the artists © the artists, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Claudia Larcher, *Panorama*, object, paper, foil, metal, 2014 © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Felix Kraus, *NowForeVR*, 2016 – Virtual Reality Animation, 4k, 3D, 360°, 4 Min. Loop © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Fiona Valentine Thomann, *Tracker*, digital sculpture and VR experience, 2017 (installation view Exgirlfriend Gallery, Berlin, 2017) © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne



Fiona Valentine Thomann, *Tracker*, digital sculpture and VR experience, 2017 © the artist, courtesy of the artist and PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne