

Catalogue Text

COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

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FORUM STADTPARK, Stadtpark 1, 8010 Graz

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Anita Witek has made photographic reproducibility into the theme of her cross-media installations. Her exclusively analogue image compositions are based on collage techniques. These montages reject the usual reading of image spaces and in return open a space for critical image awareness. The order of the images found in the materials used, for example printed documents such as posters or books, are dissolved through different forms of cutting. Witek mounts arbitrary cuts through a whole illustrated book into a confusing overlaying and permeation of viewpoints, which frustrate any attempt at visual orientation. An almost picturesque approach has increasingly emerged from Witek's collages, as every cut is similar to the stroke of a brush. Witek originally studied painting; in 2016 she was awarded the Österreichischen Kunstpreis für künstlerische Fotografie (Austrian art prize for artistic photography) for her work on the concept of the image.

Primary material of the Make a Wish installation in the exhibition in Berlin and Graz are advertisement posters, themselves already a symbol of powerful meaninglessness. Witek has, however, removed everything from these posters which can be considered visual information. What remains is visual noise, which is also how we perceive the flood of images from the media with all its visual overload. What comes increasingly to the fore as a cultural technique is the targeted selection of content which we address with concentration, so as not to lose ourselves in the constant state of distraction. In other words, Witek works her way through different media levels of visual culture.

Pictures are her primary material, their fragmentation refers to their selection in the process of perception and then in the creation of new cohesions and syntheses. Through the methodical playing with collages, Witek develops dense space-image constructions which remain unreadable as spaces

because all references to reality have been removed. Real space is also involved in this process, as Witek deliberately wipes out these points of reference as part of the installation. Part of the production process – or even the final product – are analogue photographs which summarize the discontinuities of all viewpoints across the joint image area and which complete the quasi-homeopathic process of information collection and view compaction.

The second title of the Make a Wish installation is Homme dans un fauteuil – in reference to Pablo Picasso's

painting Femme dans un fauteuil from 1946, later found on the blog of an artist on Tumblr. Woman and sofa are so abstractedly represented that they remind one of the formal elements of the collage by Witek; the colour of the picture is also similar. In both cases the focus is on the perception of spaces. While in Cubism the room is broken down into its different views to achieve a simultaneity of spatial views in the surface, Witek constructs image spaces through the overlaying of surfaces which only develop a concrete, physical spatiality due to the loose fitting of the pieces of paper. David Hockney draws ingeniously on Picasso with his breaking-up of the classic perspective representation: Perception is "a matter of layering"¹: temporal, spatial, narrative layers in constant overlaying of images. This is a process for which Witek has found an exciting method of formal reflection.

<http://anitawitek.net/>