

Artforum, April 2016

## Anita Witek

KUNST HAUS WIEN

Untere Weissgerberstraße 13

January 22, 2016–May 22, 2016

Layer by layer, Anita Witek's image-worlds are built up; layer by layer, visitors work through the diverse formats in this exhibition: photomontage, slide projection, installation, and small detailed sculpture in display cases. The unifying element in "About Life" are found photographs that Witek cuts from posters and fashion and lifestyle magazines, which she reworks to develop, from the remaining backgrounds, abstract and surreal architectures that unsettle the gaze.

For the two-channel slide projection *Retour en forme* (Back in Shape), 2008, which cites a Constructivist vocabulary, sheet after sheet of cut pages from magazines are photographically documented and presented in an arrangement of animated images. The assembly plays as much with the moment of showing as that of hiding. The high point of the exhibition is the installation *About Life*, 2016, a site-specific piece you can walk on and in which Witek's image-spaces turn into real architecture. Cut posters hang from nearly three-foot-high wooden frameworks and from the wall. The photographic gray gradients are interrupted by the flash of the blue reverse side of the paper as well as by the lines of sight in the space. The source materials here advertise retrospectives at the Kunst Haus Wien devoted to Robert Mapplethorpe, Man Ray, and Albert Watson, and the images of their works—in changed, abstracted form—circulate new ideas. Throughout, "About Life" trumpets the coming and going of photographic images—an interminable stream, as one is acquainted with it in real life.

*Translated from German by Diana Reese.*



View of "Anita Witek: About Life," 2016.

— Franz Thalmair