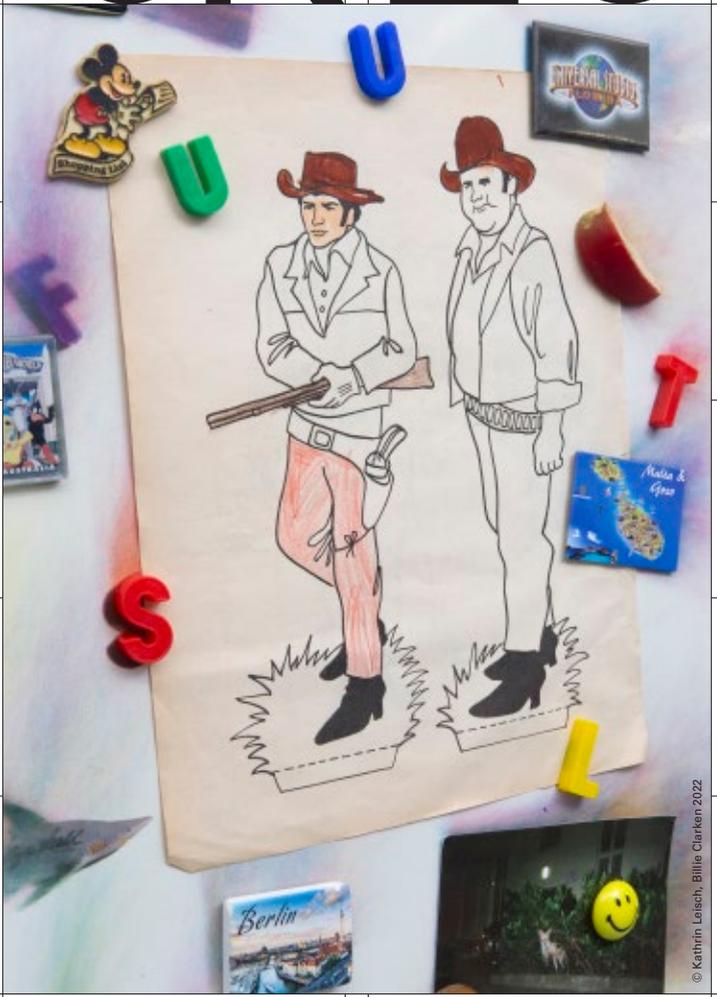


DOCK 20

Kunstraum



Billie Clarcken: Cancel the Reboot



Duration:
18 Feb – 15 Mar 2022
Opening:
17 Feb 2022, 7 pm

Billie Clarcken's installation-based practice explores the visual politics of the contemporary culture industry. Initially a photographer, the artist shifted her focus to three-dimensional media and became known for sculptural works featuring the ghostly images of such celebrities as Anna Nicole Smith or Miley Cyrus printed on foam material.

so, they exert a greater influence on the physical world than their human subjects ever could. Printing the spectral pictures on large pieces of foam – images that have long haunted the boundless spheres of digital half-worlds – re-embodies them in a sense. This new physicality relocates and situates them in the specific social and spatial context of the exhibition space.

policewoman and teenage mom in her own right epitomized the American dream with her meteoric rise from strip club dancer to style icon. Yet failure seemed built in her media narrative from the very start. Her tragic death affirmed the perpetually-attentive media world's perception that no real human being could ever sustain such a public image without losing themselves in it.

The appropriated, reproduced, and repurposed images take on a life of their own, becoming the starting point for Clarcken's investigations of stardom and identity. As early as 1978, the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard observed a social paradigm shift towards what he described as "desert of the real": the condition whereby images ultimately become the expression of their own reality, "substituting the signs of the real for the real." In doing

Billie Clarcken's exhibition "Cancel the Reboot" focuses on famous personalities whose likenesses still hold a prominent place in the collective media memory – years after their subjects were broken by an exploitative star system. Anna Nicole Smith, the erotic-model-turned-actress who died in 2007, was a poster child for this contradiction in terms even during her lifetime: born in the tiny Texas town of Mexia, the daughter of a young

What remains is a picture of a blonde icon, a media-generated image that has been shared and reproduced millions of times and continues to circulate widely today. It shows a body that, printed on foam in Clarcken's presentation, also reads as a hollowed-out allegory of the noughties.

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Permeability and porosity, boundaries and breaks are a recurring feature of Clarcken's preferred materials. In many cases, the items used – refrigerator doors and garden tools, for example – add aspects of their "previous lives" as utility objects to the work.

Clarcken's pieces give castaway or obsolete objects an *after-life*, transforming them into contemporary witnesses reflecting not only collective experience, but collective memories as well. For her 2021 works Trap Door #2 (In the Memory of Others) and Trap Door #3 (BEHIND EVERY ISSUE IS AN ADVERTISEMENT), the artist gathered discarded refrigerator doors from streets near her home in Berlin's Neukölln district. In a reference to classical panel paintings, she uses them as "windows to the world" – or, in this case, windows to the imagined, sentimental worlds of their fictitious previous owners, including jumbles of personal keepsakes, souvenirs, and postcards that appear individually collaged. Only at second glance does it become clear that neither the objects nor their histories are real.

