Fig. 4.

Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)

With works by
Jennifer Grimyser | Elisabeth Grübl |
Manfred Grübl | Michael Kargl | Arnold Reinthaler |
Stefan Riebel | Ignacio Uriarte | Anita Witek

Curated by Birgit Rinagl | Franz Thalmair

Exhibition: January 17 – March 1, 2013
Opening: January 16, 2013, 7 pm

Guided tour with the curators: January 30, 2013, 7 pm
Artists talk: February 12, 2013, 7 pm
Catalogue presentation: February 27, 2013, 7 pm

Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)

Birgit Rinagl and Franz Thalmair

I always refers to the person who is currently speaking, who is expressing their thoughts with words, formulating ideas, and who then discards them in the moment of expression in order to generate new ones. *I* always refers to the person who is speaking through their perceptions to other people and attempts to conduct a dialogue. In the same way, the words *here* and *now* are correlated with the respective speech act, its protagonists, and its situational context. *Here* and *now* mark the concrete place and moment of the expression, but they also mark an abstract and variable structure in its spatial and temporal dimensions. *Here* and *now* always refer to the person who is currently speaking. Hence, *I*, *here*, and *now* always refer to different subjects, to different moments, and to different points of view.

The exhibition *Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)* builds upon the "Theory of Language" formulated by Karl Bühler in the 1930s and translates the model of the "deictic field of language" into the realm of visual art. The aim of this transfer is to explore questions on the variability of a person-dependent, individual, and thereby subjective point of view and to interpret them in a contemporary context through artistic means: Who addresses whom in which relationship and with which intentions? Which different concepts, perceptions, and ideas are linked to one and the same artistic expression? How does the perspective of the producer manifest in the act of artistic expression and that of the recipient in the process of perception?

The curatorial research is centred around the concept of the "origo", which the psychologist and philosopher Karl Bühler defined as the zero point of the personal, spatial, and temporal structure of the speech act: "Let two perpendicularly intersecting

lines on the paper suggest a coordinate system to us, 0 for the origin, the coordinate source: My claim is that if this arrangement is to represent the deictic field of human language, three deictic words must be placed where the 0 is, namely the deictic words *here*, *now* and *I*."[1] In his "Theory of Language" Bühler differentiated fundamentally between the "symbolic field" and the "deictic field" of language. The symbolic field describes the linguistic space of perception, which is structured by naming words such as "table", "lamp", or "chair". Similarly, he defined a space of reference in which speakers operate with deictic words and corresponding gestures. While naming words describe the same extralinguistic objects for all speakers, deictic words like *I*, *here*, and *now*, however, can only be read on the basis of the origo, the origin, which resides with the respective speaker. This leads to the fact that the origo can be precisely localised but nevertheless remains fleeting in its essence.

In the context of the exhibition *Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)*, methods intrinsic to art are hereby employed to reconsider sociocultural questions, which, on the one hand, are linked to the concepts *I*, *here*, and *now*, and whose answer, on the other, is found in the respective paradigm in which the questions are posed. If one understands speech action as social action and transfers this understanding to the media of visual art, it becomes evident that the exhibition not only involves the construction of a self-referential web of artistic, curatorial, and theoretical production but, to a greater degree, the discussion of realities beyond its own referential framework, the investigation of interrelationships in society, and last but not least the formulation of (self-)critique. To this end, the linguistic variables *I*, *here*, and *now* serve not only to localise the subjects but also as media to negotiate themes such as the artist-subject and the conditions of the production and reception of art, displaying and exhibiting in art spaces, and the artistic act within a broader communicative, social, and political context. *Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)* underlines the assumption that artistic productions enable the revision of one's own point of view and view of the world by

leading viewers to the zero point of the "coordinate system of 'subjective orientation', in which all partners in communication are and remain caught up".[2] The permanent oscillation of human perception between *I*, *you*, *here*, *there*, *now*, *before*, and *after* ultimately shifts in this manner from an automated cognitive process necessary in the everyday to conscious perception.

The exhibition *Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)* intentionally builds upon fundamental and often casually used colloquial terms. The words *I*, *here*, and *now*, however, are not only used as identificational reference points to provide orientation for the viewers; they also reveal their own modes of perception, offer possibilities for self-reflection, and eventually dissolve the already found orientation. "There is nothing conspicuous about the phonetic form, about the phonematic impress of the words *now*, *here*, *I*;" writes Karl Bühler on the casualness of the terms, "all that is peculiar about them is what each of them demands: the first demands, look at me, an acoustic phenomenon, and take me as a mark of the moment; as a mark of the place, says the second; and the third, as a mark of the sender (or characteristic of the sender)."[3] The selected artworks and their arrangement into the chapters *I | Subject*, *Now | Work*, and *Here | Space* reflect the variability of Karl Bühler's concept of the "origo of the deictic field". But the presented works can also be categorised in different ways depending on the reading direction and interpretation, depending on the artistic, curatorial, or viewer-oriented perspective, because this decision ultimately (also) involves the question of the respective point of view.

[1] Karl Bühler: *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*,
trans. Donald Fraser Goodwin in collaboration with Achim Eschbach,
John Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam: 1990, p. 117.
[2] Ibid., p. 118.
[3] Ibid.

I | Subject – Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)

The artist-subject and the viewer-subject are the focus in the first chapter *I | Subject*. Questions are posed on artistic authorship and the related originality and genius of artworks: How does an art market-driven orientation towards artists' biographies contribute as a meaningful criterion in the valuation of art? Who is speaking when art finds its expression and who is addressed with the artistic expression? Is there a superordinate author, a model-like abstract artist-subject that speaks to society in the name of society or is the artist-subject one of more components in a complex interactive system, the development of which he or she can only partially influence?

Jennifer Grimyser, *61.7 hours*, 2007
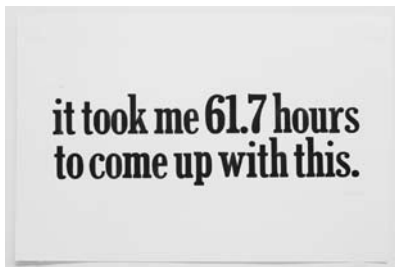**Manfred Grübl, *Personal Installation*, 2010**
Arnold Reinthaler, *still alive*, 2008–
Stefan Riebel, *Mein Atem (My Breath)*, 2012
**Anita Witek, *Do you know where you are,
   do you know what you've done?*, 1998**
Anita Witek, *Retour en forme*, 2008

61.7 hours, 2007
Letterpress print on paper, 35.5 × 53.3 cm

"Language is used to convey meaning, yet I use text as a means to produce ideas. My work questions our understanding of language," says Jennifer Grimyser. In *61.7 hours* the artist employs printed linguistic symbols to pose fundamental questions about the origin, communication, and reception of text and its function and effect in the realm of visual art. She playfully addresses the shortcomings of linguistic communication through modalities of visual perception. "It took me 61.7 hours to come up with this," is printed in black letters on a white background and refers to—as one possible interpretation—the artist herself as well as the time it took her to formulate her artistic expression. "In the process of understanding, seeing comes before reading," states the artist further. "Yet in my work seemingly brief statements merge the textual and the visual into an interdependent relationship."

Jennifer Grimyser, born in 1984 (US), lives and works in Brooklyn/NY (US).
www.jennifergrimyser.com
Courtesy of the artist

***Personal Installation,* 2010**

Lambda print, 150 × 201 cm

In *Personal Installation* eight black-dressed people position themselves in the exhibition space according to a closed orthogonal system. Over the course of the opening of the exhibition the performers remain standing in this position with an open gaze toward the respective opposite protagonist until the end of the vernissage. Initially each person appears to be a single manifestation. The more the exhibition space empties, the more visible the underlying structure of the installation becomes. At the beginning of the event the eight people are hardly noticeable and blend in visually with the goings-on. Only when the first visitors slowly begin to disappear from the opening scenario does the relationship between the individual subjects become apparent. With the last visitors who leave the exhibition opening, the space-in-the-space designed by the artist dissolves once again, vanishing just as casually as it emerged.

Manfred Grübl, born in 1965 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).

www.manfred.gruebl.org

Photo: Daniela Beranek
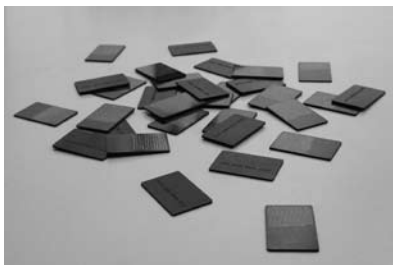
still alive, 2008–
Series, nero assoluto granite, each 8.6 × 5.4 × 0.3 cm

In his work _still alive_ Arnold Reinthaler documents experienced
time and time yet to be experienced—stroke by stroke, day by
day, month by month: Engraved on black granite cards, the artist
records the elapsed number of hours with counting lines in order
to calculate from their sum the still remaining time to live and
potentially work. The common credit card format is symbolic of
a personal time credit, which without fail decreases and whose
total amount remains uncertain for the artist. The medium of
black granite instead of plastic suggests weight and enduring
value. But at the same time it also refers to the gravestone,
which comes into play when the question of the still remaining
lifetime can finally be answered and counting the number of hours
becomes irrelevant. Through a continuous artistic act _still alive_
attempts to capture the moment and constitute the present.

Arnold Reinthaler, born in 1971 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.reinthaler.org
Courtesy of the artist

Mein Atem (My Breath), 2012

Approx. 4000 inflated balloons, variable sizesl

Balloons inflated with the artist's breath randomly cover the floor of the exhibition space. Stefan Riebel's _Mein Atem (My Breath)_ oscillates between being a decorative and performative-interactive element, between artist and audience, and between the other works situated in the space. The fragile and variable sculpture references both the vital process of breathing and the necessity of artistic production. The _I_ of the artist is positioned in an art machinery in a manner that contradicts its marketing strategies as the impermanence of the installation rejects acquisition or ownership. Like the presence of the artist-subject in the art market, the individual art objects are subject to permanent change, change in their position in the space, in their state and form. Subject and object are governed by institutional framework conditions, from here and now to the end of the exhibition—or to an end decided by physical laws.

Stefan Riebel, born in 1982 (DE), lives and works in Berlin (DE).

www.stefanriebel.de

Courtesy of the artist

Do you know where you are,
***do you know what you've done?*, 1998**
Video, 11:00 min, 4:3 format

In *Do you know where you are, do you know what you've done?*
Anita Witek represents the mass media interplay between private
and public identity and between perpetrator and victim roles in
the form of a self-portrait. The video material used by the artist
documents her daily walk from her home to her workplace and
originates from more than 50 public surveillance cameras in
the London underground system. Even though the cameras
continuously follow the path of the artist, the view of the devices
remains partial and fragmentary. *Do you know where you are,
do you know what you've done?* utilises the view of foreign and
superordinate subjects in the design of a self-image—and takes
a step further. Because even when the view of oneself and the
view of another always remain separate, the view of the other
is constitutive for the self-image—a reciprocal relationship.

Anita Witek, born in 1971 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.anitawitek.net
Courtesy of the artist

Retour en forme, 2008
Slide projection, 160 slides

No models in unnatural poses, no portraits of celebrities, no
perfectly shaped bodies, no subjects – instead, nameless voids
without age or origin. In *Retour en forme* Anita Witek collages
found material from lifestyle, fashion, and other illustrated sources
of everyday culture. Arranged in the form of a slide projection, the
artist substantiates an apparent narrative sequence by layering
the images taken from the magazines page for page upon each
other. The subject, however, that was once at the centre of
the original photo is missing. What remains is a succession of
fleeting photographic backgrounds with voids of different sizes
that complement, enhance, or contradict one another on a formal-
aesthetic level. In Retour en forme Anita Witek revisits the
constructivist formal language and reformulates it with the visual
language disseminated by mass media in the 21st century.

Anita Witek, born in 1971 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.anitawitek.net
View of the installation: Camera Austria, June 30 – September 2, 2012.
Photo: Christine Winkler

Now | Work – Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)

The second chapter *Now | Work* explores the act of artistic expression itself. How do the multilayered relationships between the producing and receiving subject and the autonomy assigned to the work affect the specific manner in which viewers experience the art objects within a societal context? Which multilayered contentual, formal, and material conditions contribute to the production of artistic expression? Is the object as the end result of a process more important or the field of action that the art object is embedded in?
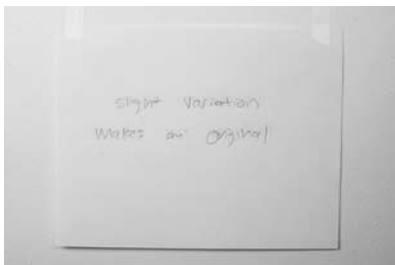
Jennifer Grimyer, *Slight variation*, 2006
Elisabeth Grübl and Manfred Grübl,
   ***untitled, interactive installation*, 2010**
Arnold Reinthaler, *long time recording*, 2008–
Stefan Riebel, *untitled*, 2007–
Ignacio Uriarte, *A Stack*, 2010
Ignacio Uriarte, *Infinity*, 2010

Slight variation, 2006

Series, 40 digital prints, each 12.7 × 17.8 cm

"slight variation wakes an original", "trivial variations could construct an original", or "original variations originate an original": Individual pencil scribbled sentences are presented chronologically in their order of creation in the exhibition space. In _Slight variation_ Jennifer Grimyser varies written statements about original and variation through erasing the respective sentence immediately after writing it and then overwriting it with a new statement on the same place. The originals, however, remain present as they are still visible despite having been erased: as a trace of graphite, as a depression, or as a roughened spot on the paper. The more often the carrier medium is overwritten, the more vague the handwriting of the most recent statement becomes. The individual sentences oscillate between original and copy, between origin and artistic interpretation, and ultimately consolidate into a whole, becoming perceptible as an image.

Jennifer Grimyser, born in 1984 (US), lives and works in Brooklyn/NY (US).

www.jennifergrimyser.com

Courtesy of the artist

***untitled, interactive installation**, 2010*

4 electronic massage mats, each 50 × 170 cm

Elisabeth Grübl's and Manfred Grübl's installation *untitled, interactive installation* focuses on the activation of the human body with technical devices. Four standard massage mats with remote controls functionally correspond to the form of the human body. But the individual massage zones are not only conceived as object-like readymades to be presented in the exhibition space, rather they are to be used by the viewers. The more subjects who accept the invitation for a massage, the more intensely the installation manifests as a changing soundscape in the space. The enhanced potentials for reception on a visual, sensory, and acoustic level trigger an intensified self-perception of the user: through stimulating one's body, through perceiving the neighbouring user, and finally through perceiving the object itself.

Elisabeth Grübl, born in 1961 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.gruebl.org
Manfred Grübl, born in 1965 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.manfred.gruebl.org
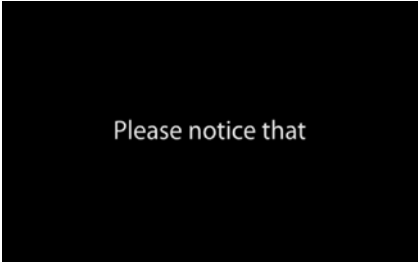Photo: Manfred Grübl

***long time recording*, 2008–**

Series, Thassos marble, each 184 × 57 × 3 cm; wall object, each 82 × 82 cm

long time recording consists of white marble tablets from which
Arnold Reinthaler continuously removes individual elements.
The grid of three-dimensional pixels milled into the surface of
the stones visualises the number of hours in a year. The artist
breaks a cube out of the calendar-like system for every hour
of his life that he devotes to the production of art. The carrier
medium reflects the temporal process of this act in the form
of voids, whereas the extracted cubes are presented scattered
along the wall. What is important in *long time recording* is not the
sculptural end product, however, not the tablets or the extracted
cubes, but the process of "productive documentation" with
which the artist attempts to capture the moment, the now.

Arnold Reinthaler, born in 1971 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).

www.reinthaler.org

Courtesy of the artist

untitled, 2007–
Video series, various durations, 16:9 format

untitled is a series of video sequences that Stefan Riebel designed for public space, the Internet, and for exhibition contexts. They are simple text animations made without the use of a camera. White typography on a black background demands different actions from the viewer, reflects their present situation, or sharpens the viewers' awareness for significant details in the surrounding they are presented in. "Please notice that this video is exactly one minute long," states one work, "Thank you for watching this movie. Without you it would not be here," says another. All videos are based on the idea of creating communication between the audience, the work, and the space. Stefan Riebel uses these videos as an apparative extension to his performative work and an opportunity—free from his own subject—to enter into a dialogue with the audience and the respective exhibition space.

Stefan Riebel, born in 1982 (DE), lives and works in Berlin (DE).
www.stefanriebel.de
Courtesy of the artist

A Stack, 2010
Animation on DVD, 2:34 min, 4:3 format

Within 80 seconds a white piece of A4 paper grows into a stack of 2000 pieces. Immediately upon reaching its maximum height the stack begins to shrink back to its initial size at the same speed. *A Stack* by Ignacio Uriarte is reminiscent of a slow process of inhaling and exhaling. But this iterative moment also evokes the everyday working field, which time and again routinely demands the same act. Just when the required to-do lists have barely been accomplished, the work process begins anew with no end in sight. The movement of the stack of paper provokes contemplation, which is contrasted with the prospect of the still outstanding tasks. The emptiness of each and every piece of paper, however, defuses the pressure of the duties because the blank page that doesn't (yet) convey any information and only refers to itself is totally open to the interpretation of its recipient—and the present moment of observation.

Ignacio Uriarte, born in 1972 (DE), lives and works in Berlin (DE).
www.ignaciouriarte.com
Courtesy of the artist
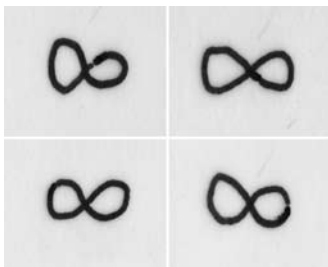
Infinity, 2010
Animation on DVD, 2:54 min, 4:3 format

When the lemniscate, the mathematical symbol of infinity, is
handwritten the symbol loses its regular loop-like shape. This has
to do with placing the pen and lifting it up from the paper and can
be identified as a void or ink excess. Ignacio Uriarte addressed this
contradiction in his animation *Infinity* where he attempts to give
back the symbol—drawn by the author with an interruption—its
true infinity. To achieve this the artist repeatedly paused the lying 8
from the previous copy, which provokes a continuous change of the
original shape: The starting and end point now moves in an endless
loop along the form of the symbol and replaces the void with
motion. The inaccessibility of the phenomenon of infinity to human
perception manifests in *Infinity* through routine, through a forward
movement which at the same time is retrogressive, and ultimately
references both the beginning and the end, the here and the now.

Ignacio Uriarte, born in 1972 (DE), lives and works in Berlin (DE).
www.ignaciouriarte.com
Courtesy of the artist

Here | Space – Origo (At Point Zero of the Point of View)

In the third chapter *Here | Space*, the art space is investigated in the modalities of exhibiting, presenting and concealing, inclusion and exclusion, and put up for discussion. Which spatial requirements are necessary so that the viewers can incorporate the reality models constructed by art into their own lived reality? What effect do artistic fields of action have on the perception of their viewers? Which functional and social parameters must art spaces adhere to in order that the art presented is not isolated from overall societal relationships?

Elisabeth Grübl, *inside_outside*, 2010
Elisabeth Grübl, *Studio #15 Esther Stocker*, 2010
Michael Kargl, *double element/single element*, 2013
Michael Kargl, *re:space/settings*, 2013
Ignacio Uriarte, *Two folds*, 2009
Anita Witek, *Polaroid of places that have never existed*, 1998

***inside_outside,* 2010**
Cut MDF, blackboard paint, 114 × 25.5 × 1 cm

Letter after letter in a row, without space between these smallest components that carry the meaning of a written word, the first seven characters form the word *outside*—the part of the object *inside_outside* that Elisabeth Grübl mounts to the wall as the background. The word *inside* is superimposed upon the word *outside*, resulting in a text object whose elements are not only compressed into a spatial unit but also on the level of content. By spatialising the form of the text Elisabeth Grübl counteracts the dissolution of the multidimensional human perception of space through the linearisation of letters. The two layers thrust in different directions: *outside* pushes through the wall into the external space; *inside* grows towards the viewing subject in the room. Yet the two terms are also drawn towards/against each other thereby causing the border of the space to oscillate.

Elisabeth Grübl, born in 1961 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.gruebl.org
Photo: Barbara Krobath

Studio #15 Esther Stocker, 2010
Sculpture, Lambda print, framed, 165 × 122 cm

The studio as a site for the production of art is the initial point for Elisabeth Grübl's photo series *Studio*. In the course of a performance, which is not visible for the audience, the artist forms a cuboidal block from all of the artwork, furniture, and other material present in the workspace of an artist friend and then captures the resulting construct photographically. With Grübl's architectural intervention the studio—an open space of possibility, where one works or lives, which sometimes is not only a site of production but also of presentation—undergoes a transformation into a temporary art space, which is the result of an artistic act and thereby a work of art. In the work *Studio* the artist reflects upon the relationships between the workspace and the objects present within and intensifies this interplay once again through a photographic juxtaposition of emptiness and densification.

Elisabeth Grübl, born in 1961 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).
www.gruebl.org
Courtesy Ursula Maria Probst
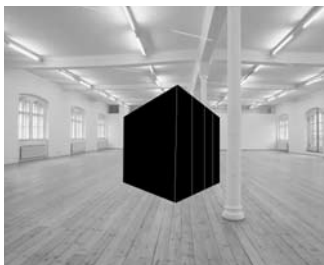
double element/single element, **2013**

Mobile wall system, variable size

At the Kunsthalle Exnergasse there is a mobile wall system for the design of exhibitions. It can be integrated into the exhibition space, but it cannot be removed. In *double element/single element* Michael Kargl takes this fact as initial point to draw the visitors' attention to these architectural elements, which are used in different combinations as seemingly neutral surfaces for the presentation of art. The number and size of the objects, their materiality, and their varying positions play as much of a role as does the distance between work and audience, which is crucial for perception. With this site-specific focus the artist not only concentrates on the partition walls themselves, he poses superordinate questions about the production process behind exhibitions—in this case at the Kunsthalle Exnergasse.

Michael Kargl, born in 1975 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).

www.michaelkargl.com

Courtesy of the artist

***re:space/settings*, 2011**

Mural drawing, blue chalk, variable size

As an individual piece or arranged in groups, in dialogue with one or more counterparts, as an untidy mix or in a linear sequence— the hanging, setting, or positioning of art is a method to produce a narrative with a particular selection of works and at the same time underlines the curatorial authorship. In *re:space/settings* Michael Kargl makes reference to historical practices of institution-critical art and transfers them to the current art scene represented in "alternative" art spaces. By restaging a selection of earlier exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Exnergasse for the visitors in the form of place holders, the artist reveals the modes of presentation that are often designated as experimental in alternative exhibition contexts. Whether the results of this process can ultimately be read as a carbon copy of conventional methods is up to the viewer.

Michael Kargl, born in 1975 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).

www.michaelkargl.com

View of the installation: Glockengasse No9, Vienna, October 8 – 21, 2011.

Curtesy of the artist

Two folds, 2009
Folded A4 paper, 24 pieces, each 21 × 29.7 cm

Two lines diagonally cross 24 serially hung A4 sheets of paper. The first line is folded inward and the second outward. In *Two folds* Ignacio Uriarte focuses his view—informed by office life—on the sculptural gesture. The standard white A4 photocopier paper, which is typically used as a two-dimensional carrier medium for the widest variety of texts, undergoes not only a spatialisation; Ignacio Uriarte endows the act of folding common in the working field with yet another temporal level. The fleeting nature of the pieces of paper mounted on the wall, the disappearance of the white paper on the equally so white background of the presentation wall, and the number of 24 pieces refer to the hourly structure of a day and to the possibility to continue the two ends of the wall installation through folding additional pieces of paper..

Ignacio Uriarte, born in 1972 (DE), lives and works in Berlin (DE).
www.ignaciouriarte.com
Courtesy of Figge von Rosen Galerie & Nogueras Blanchard Barcelona
Photo: Taka Ishii Gallery

***Polaroids of places that have never existed*, 1998**

Series, C-prints, each 23 × 23 cm

In *Polaroids of places that have never existed* Anita Witek
generates image spaces that do not follow an architectonic logic
or serve a homogenous architecture. The artist cuts everyday
images produced and disseminated by mass media out of their
original context, collages and layers them, and photographs
the resulting new image material. Perspectival spaces and
objects tapering in various directions and the relationship of
light and shadow suggest a spatial depth that time and again
is called into question by visual breaks. In an irritating manner,
the cumulative layering principle that constitutes the images
triggers an awareness among viewers of their own perception.
The collages are photographed with an analog camera, which
from the outset eliminates the possibility of editing with digital
image programs. The fleeting quality of the photo material further
enhances the illusion of the authenticity of the depicted spaces.

Anita Witek, born in 1971 (AT), lives and works in Vienna (AT).

www.anitawitek.net

Courtesy of the artist