

BODY—ME

Wall texts**Body-Me: The Body in the Age of Digital Technology**

Yuri Ancarani, Kate Cooper, Melanie Gilligan and Thomas Thwaites

The technology of today's digital society is altering our relationship to the world around us: It is advancing new possibilities for physical experience and sensual perception and is affecting our interactions with our surroundings as well as our conception of reality. The exhibition "Body-Me: The Body in the Age of Digital Technology" focuses on the human body as a material to be reexamined in terms of our existence in a digital and hyper technological society. Through their work, artists Yuri Ancarani, Kate Cooper, Melanie Gilligan and Thomas Thwaites offer very different perspectives on the increasing shift of physical, sensory and social experience to a virtual and mental plane. The resulting transformations of the relationships between subject and object, self and other and man and machine culminate in a synthesis of imagination and reality. The artistic positions chosen for the exhibition question the degree to which our physical existence relates to our inner experience, how we experience our physical limitations and how the age of digital technology is changing our understanding of the body.

Melanie GilliganTHE COMMON SENSE (PHASE 1), 2014-15

5-Kanal HD Video-Installation, LED- TVs, pulverbeschichtete Stahlröhren, synchronisiert, Farbe, Sound / *5-channel HD video installation, LED TVs, powder-coated steel tubes, synchronised, colour, sound*

Videos je 6-7 min / *each 6-7 min*

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf

Melanie Gilligan's video installation presents the first three episodes of her three-part sci-fi mini-series "The Common Sense." The storyline revolves around a technology simply called Patch. Placed on the roof of the mouth like a throat lozenge, it establishes an empathetic connection to other people, making it possible to directly experience their physical sensations and feelings. In Gilligan's version of the future, this fictional technology, whose principles recall an economy of sensations of today's social media platforms, has been around for a decade. During this time, it has drastically altered the relationship between the individual and the collective. Participation in one of the communities created by Patch, whose technology also serves as an instrument for control and surveillance, has become a prerequisite for an individual's economic and social existence. In the first scene, promotional films dating back to the first generation of Patch are being shown to a school class to help foster an under-

standing of the vision behind the new technology. As the episodes progress it becomes clear that the new form of interpersonal relation has in fact lead to harmonious co-existence in several situations. It is, however, not possible to separate the newly formed human community from a form of capitalism that preaches self improvement and ensures social control through absolute transparency. The individual, as part of a social body, thus becomes conditioned to physical productivity and mental efficiency. Gilligan scrutinizes the opposition between a negative view of individualism and a positive reaction to collective behavior that results when a community exists to serve the purposes of an economic system. Gilligan's utopian vision offers an extreme portrayal of social interaction's transition to a virtual world and shows how vulnerable this development is to commercial exploitation. With the scenario of a deep and persistent interpersonal connection, the artist examines how coexistence is formed and what status individuality and community are given in the process.

Thomas Thwaites

I, GOAT, 2015

Skulptur / sculpture,

Holz, Schlittschuhe, Stoff / wood, ice skates, fabric

Video 16:05 min; 9 Drucke / 9 prints

Courtesy the artist

With his project "I, Goat" Thomas Thwaites alters physical reality in an attempt to escape his own human perspective and take on another way of experiencing the world. Through a process of elaborate anatomical tests and research on materials, he has developed a construction of special prosthetic limbs that enables him to imitate a goat's gait on all fours. Additional discussions with experts have given him profound knowledge about the animals' lives and their social behavior. He ultimately spent several days as part of a goat herd in the Swiss Alps during an experiment he conducted on himself. Thwaites considers himself a "designer (of a more speculative sort)" whose artistic practice concerns the sciences and visions of the future and whose projects meditate on complex philosophical questions in a humorous and essential way. His attempt to take on the perspective of a goat speaks to that longing for temporary escape from the human experience, a change in sensory awareness and the possibility of growth beyond our anatomical dispositions.

The modern idea concerning evolutionary progress, at the heart of which lies the technological enhancement of mental and physical productivity, is contained in the post-humanist discussions related to his projects. Thwaites attempts to disengage from this notion as he strives to lead a life whose daily purpose concerns the fundamentals of existence in a natural surrounding. Here, the search for food, the dynamic of the herd and protection from outside harm play a central role. Thwaites analyzes the mechanisms of nature and simulates them using technology. He does not attempt to escape his awareness of space and time, but rather tries to access it from another perspective by altering sensory and physical experience. His self-experimentation investigates the dependence of consciousness on the body and utilizes technological means in an attempt to generate an altered perception of reality that is able to disengage from the anthropocentric discourse.

Kate Cooper

RIGGED, 2014

HD Videos 1:54 min und / *and* 4:28 min

zwei Digitaldrucke auf Papier (Vliestapete)

/ *two digital prints on wallpaper (fleece wallpaper)*

Courtesy the artist and Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin

In her installation "RIGGED", Kate Cooper uses CGI technology to translate the physical body into hyper real, stereotypical, female models. Her entirely constructed computer generated models of young women with flawless bodies in sports wear borrow from the familiar aesthetics of mass-advertising. In a light jog, they move through a sterile, digitally animated surrounding that lacks spatial depth or other natural features. Close-ups of the computer generated faces display silver braces and plastic mouth guards, or track the models' glances with mimetic precision. The billboard-size fleece wallpaper picks up on these motifs, rendering the figures synthetically superhuman. The images have an auditory element in which a flattering feminine voice meditates on the ideal of an ageless and youthful body, ultimately repeating the slogan "disappear completely" over and over again. With their exaggerated perfection and symbolic optimization, the female figures in RIGGED no longer represent a real life corporeality. By appropriating the pervasive visual language of commercialism, the artist reflects its agency with particular reference to the female body and advances a new interpretation of feminist discourse.

Kate Cooper has been a member of the collaborative art studio Auto Italia South East since 2007. Her work, both as part of a collective and as a solo artist, revolves around alternative forms of artistic production. She questions the essence and meaning of digital-age images with regard to a contemporary hypercapitalism that increasingly utilizes immaterial labor and outsources production to other parts of the world.

Yuri Ancarani

DA VINCI, 2012

35mm Film, Farbe / *colour* 5.1, Dolby Digital

25 min

Courtesy the artist, Galleria Zero, Milan and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

The lead in Yuri Ancarani's film "Da Vinci" is a sophisticated technological surgical system named after the Italian polymath. When performing an operation with the "da Vinci Si Surgical System," the surgeon does not have direct contact with the patient's body. He instead guides the highly precise instruments from a console. A high-definition video feed from area of the operation, which is performed using micro-invasive technology, gives the surgeon a magnified view of the procedure. Ancarani uses these shots for his film whose documentary approach explores the existential relationship between man and machine. The video artist captures the visible and delicate anatomical structures in shades of blue, thereby creating a level of distance between viewer and film. A thudding, threatening bass underscores the palpable tension among the team of doctors present in the operating room and carries it over to the viewer's own body. In contrast to pessimistic visions of a future in which robots replace mankind, Ancarani's work visualizes surgeon and operating instrument as a synergetic entity and thus departs from a mere contrast of man and machine.

Ancarani's trilogy, of which "Da Vinci" is the third part, reflects on the subject of labor through its portrayal of three highly specialized occupations. In addition to surgeons, "Il Cippo" (2010) films the crew of a marble quarry and "Luna" (2011) records the daily routine on a deep-sea platform. At the focal point of all three films are the choreographed gestures that comprise the process of working.

PRESS CONTACT:
Julia Wittwer (Head of PR)
Frankfurter Kunstverein, Steinernes Haus am Römerberg,
Markt 44, 60311 Frankfurt am Main
Tel: +49.69.219314-30, presse@fkv.de