

## **“The future of the woman will be her history”**

Group show: **Ursula Buchard & Petra Gell**

*curated by Meta Marina Beeck, 2018*

*„die kunst kann ein medium unserer selbstbestimmung sein, und diese bringt der kunst neue werte, diese werte werden über den kulturellen zeichenprozess die wirklichkeit verändern, einer anpassung an die weiblichen bedürfnisse entgegen. Die zukunft der frau wird die geschichte der frau sein.“* VALIE EXPORT, 1973

The title of the exhibition by Ursula Buchart and Petra Gell is a quote by Austrian artist VALIE EXPORT, who was one of the pioneer figures of European performance and body art in the 1970s. Almost 50 years later we are facing the challenges of the digital age and the art world is dominated by new techniques and facilities that are ruled by digital art, posthuman art, virtual reality and networks. The political sphere and commercial impact on society and culture are not that different to those days. Similar questions, fears, pressures and sex-role stereotypes still exist and got speeded up/heated up within the context of the Internet Age.

*“The private is political”* was one of the main slogans that was popular among the student and feminist movement in the 1960s. If we observe current developments in the political and cultural arena, this sentence shifted to a new conclusion that can be expressed via *“The private is public”*. At this point I would like to share some news that might have an impact on the history of women worldwide: 1. Beyoncé and Jay Z perform their love story on stage, produce a record about their marital crises and make millions of dollars with their story; 2. the U.S. president is having trouble with his ex-girlfriends; 3. the French president is in the papers because he married his former teacher and 4. the British royal family is getting a rejuvenation by a feminist and actor from Los Angeles.

Within the context of the exhibition Petra Gell and Ursula Buchart reflect on the arguments that were brought up in this introduction. The paintings by Ursula Buchart show female figures that resemble fashion models, pop or porn stars. But there is something wrong/suspicious/disturbing with their appearance that overshadows the canonized images of beauty, sexiness and wealth they normally represent. Buchart's paintings are imbedded in a spacious installation by Petra Gell. Her installations have a very strong similarity to a beauty salon, fitness gym, nail spa etc. and prepare a stage for Buchart's female figures.

Both artists' create a setting that reminds the viewer of a theatrical scenery. Ambivalent expressions like masquerade, make up, camouflage and surface design are only some of the terms that are inherent in their artistic practice and refer to the discussion *“Is There a Feminist Aesthetic?”* that arose in the feminist movement in the 1970s. The adaptability of material, expression of a brush stroke, transformation of spaces and seduction by words do appeal to the exhibition visitor. *“The private is seductive!”*

*Introduction by Meta Marina Beeck*