

Press release

17 December 2019

THE CINDY SHERMAN EFFECT

Identity and Transformation in Contemporary Art

29 January 2019 - 21 June 2020

In spring 2020 the Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien is presenting the exhibition The Cindy Sherman Effect. Identity and Transformation in Contemporary Art. It addresses one of the key issues in art: the preoccupation with themes of identity, its construction, forms of transformation and fiction are hot topics in the face of a world that is in constant flux through increasing globalisation. At the same time, new technologies such as the Internet, gene manipulation and cloning give cause for us to consider the concept of identity in terms of subject generation and definition.

Cindy Sherman's work is counted among the classics of performance photography and artistic role play; starting out from this base, the exhibition will cast light on these relevant questions pertaining to the theme of Identity. Sherman's photographic works – developed out of 1970s performance art and her specific interest in ever-changing identities – has never ceased to be a formative stylistic influence down to the immediate present.

The discussion surrounding post-structuralism not least paved the way to a reorganisation of authorship, which was trod later by many artists of postmodernism – prepared first and foremost by Andy Warhol with his Factory as a collective production site. With her first important series, the Untitled Film Stills(1977-1980), Cindy Sherman, icon of 1980s art production, demonstrated the rupture early on between authentic self-imaging and -performance by confronting the observer with the paradox of a strategy of denial.

The camera is used as a mirror or stage for performances of the self – or of a representative or surrogate of the self – in order to examine and deconstruct the imaged interpretation of both social and sexual identity. In Sherman's legacy, this artistic approach was followed by many artists; to name only a few: Candice Breitz, Sophie Calle, Elke Krystufek, Zoe Leonard, Sarah Lucas, Zanele Muholi, Pipilotti Rist, Markus Schinwald, Lorna Simpson, Wu Tsang, Gavin Turk, Ryan Trecartin, Gillian Wearing et al.

Sherman also inspired succeeding generations to explore the thematic field of Identity and Transformation in manifold media, but without principally modifying formerly developed artistic procedures themselves.

The exhibition in the Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien will juxtapose works by Cindy Sherman with those of contemporary artists in order to focus on such themes as deconstruction of the portrait, cultural, gender-specific and sexual stereotypes, also the construction and fiction of identity.

Curator: Bettina M. Busse

MEDIA RELATIONS: