

DAM GALLERY

17 February 2013, 11 – 15 o'clock

BACK TO BACK

Gallery opening

Aram Bartholl (D)

Eelco Brand (NL)

Joan Leandre (ES)

Gerhard Mantz (D)

Manfred Mohr (D)

Vera Molnar (F)

Casey Reas (US)

Exhibition: 20 February - 27 April 2013

New address in Frankfurt/Main:

DAM GALLERY

Wolf Lieser

Gutleutstraße 17

60329 Frankfurt on the Main

office@dam.org

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Opening hours: Wed – Fr 1 – 7 pm, Sat 12 am – 4 pm

The title of the exhibition is an allusion to the return of gallerist Wolf Lieser to the Rhine-Main region, which he left in 2003 to open **DAM GALLERY** in Berlin – with the aim of making digital art accessible to an international audience. Ten years later, the perception of digital media has undergone a fundamental change, and they are now an established part of contemporary art. However, **BACK TO BACK** also refers to the way a gallery works together with its artists, without whom any form of success or gallery activity would be impossible. So this exhibition also pays homage to a selected group of our artists, some of whom have accompanied us from the start.

Information on the exhibited art works:

Aram Bartholl (*1972), known for his conceptual interventions into our perceptions and expectations of the digital space, will be showing new works from 2013. His paper collages from the series "Graphic Array" (2013) engage with the development of the computer display. Throughout the history of the technological development of the computer, different monitor sizes, aspect ratios and resolution standards have vied with one another. This has not always just been a result of efforts to technically improve hardware, but has instead often arisen because of obvious licensing battles between computer producers. The empty pages of the collages in different formats and sizes invite the viewer to question the 'graphic array' and relate it to the 'image' per se.

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The artistic principle behind the 3D works of **Eelco Brand** (*1969) is the very gradual conversion of an idyllic natural state into a surreal visual impression. The Dutch artist produces short film clips showing a realistic nature scene in great detail. Almost unnoticeably, details of the picture change in the course of the short clip so that the familiar shifts to become surreal or absurd. Then the process of transformation starts over again. Brand's animated loops leave the viewer with an uneasy feeling. To put it simplistically: nature eludes human control and strikes back in the image. With Brand, however, this happens in such a romantic, aesthetic way that we can hardly avoid being shocked.

The video work "IN THE NAME OF KERNEL: PARALAX PARADOX (Lonely Windy Sessions)" (2010) by **Joan Leandre** (*1968) pursues a different approach. This digital film is based on a computer game whose software the artist has modified and transformed into its own aesthetic narrative. The result is a completely composed film of more than 20 minutes' duration that draws viewers into this reassembled world without their having to become protagonists in it. In "PARALAX PARADOX", the player's camera approaches, among other things, expansive, deserted landscapes of grass and forest and observes their artificial structures. The sequence of these observations does not fit any thematic narrative. The unnatural camera movements through this virtual beauty combined with the contrasting film sound create sublime visual compositions.

At the start of the 1990s, the trained painter and sculptor **Gerhard Mantz** (*1950) became one of the first artists in Germany to turn to the new visual medium of computer, creating animations and generative software works with clear references to painting. In 1993, Mantz was given the opportunity of simulating his sculptures using a 3-D program. The possibilities offered by this drafting tool led him to use the computer to construct abstract visual spaces. Gerhard Mantz: "Normally, we expect a computer program to run logically, to be self-contained and to deliver predictable results. My programs operate with regulated commands, but also open up windows to the unforeseeable. They are programmed so as to provide possibilities for creating art works." Mantz gives the following description of his digital print "Tam Dao" (2011): Top note: cypress. Middle note: sandalwood, cedar wood, rose wood. Base note: ambergris.

Manfred Mohr's (*1938) artistic work was greatly influenced at the start of the 1960s by Max Bense's theory of "information aesthetics". Mohr, who up to then had worked with surreal geometric art, turned to the computer-generated algorithmic geometric form in the beginning of the 1970s. The "Scratch Code" series roots in an early algorithms work phase (1969-72), in which a logical and automatic construction of pictures was introduced into his work. The resulting drawings were realized by a computer controlled drawing machine (plotter). With a choice of different line characteristics, Mohr created an alphabet of arbitrary generated elements. At the same time he invented individual algorithms for each individual work from which all forms and structures are solely generated. The algorithms of each plotter drawing are built from imposed as well as from random selection principles which Mohr called "aesthetical filters". The works on display are selected silkscreen prints from a limited edition of works from 1970-1976.

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The Hungarian artist **Vera Molnar** (*1924) is among the pioneers of computer art. After studying art history and aesthetics in Budapest, in 1947 she moved to Paris, where she has lived and worked ever since. In 1968, Molnar began working there with computers and created plotter drawings on the ones at the Sorbonne University in Paris. The work “(Dés)Ordres” (1974) shows Molnar's interest in the state of disorder that arises when a system malfunctions. Molnar explores the effects these often small malfunctions have on regulated systems and examines randomness as a basic factor in creative processes.

Casey Reas (*1972) is one of the developers of the open-source computer language Processing, which is used particularly by artists and designers to program interaction and visual representations. The process behind his work “Process 18, Software 4” (2012) is a comprehensively formulated written concept that is converted into a program by means of computer language. This program is then executed by a computer, producing a continually changing visual event on its screen. “Process 18, Software 4” is reminiscent of crystalline structures. An image, once it has appeared, is not repeated, so that a computer printout will remain a unique work.

The framed print “Path 10” (2001) is an unusually large print out of an earlier work series. The Path-series consists of six prints documenting the movement of synthetic neural systems. Each line in the image reveals the history of one system's movement. The individual picture elements respond to each other according to their programming. “Path 10” represents the highly aesthetic, light and feathery line poetry which once founded Reas' artistic career.

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