

hin man nur blickt. Wasserfleck oder abgebrochene Dachschindel lassen vermuten, dass hier eine selbstbegrenzende Langeweile zur obsessiven Beschäftigung mit Haus und Hausstand animiert. Trotz mancher Befremdlichkeit, die sich bei der Betrachtung einstellt, geht es bei Piller weniger um das pathologisch Exzessive (wie es etwa der Filmemacher Ulrich Seidl inszeniert) sondern um das Normale und gleichzeitig Übersehene.

Im Genfer Ausstellungsort werden Werkgruppen um die »Militaria« gezeigt. Es geht um Waffen, Kriegsschauplätze, um Kriegsberichterstattung und Militarismus. Und um das, was nicht abzubilden ist, das abwesende Grauen: Bildreihen wie »Deko + Munition« (2000 – 2006), auf eBay gefundene Fotos, in denen Geschosshülsen im Wohnzimmer auf einem Musterteppich oder neben einer Lavalampe drapiert sind. Die tödlichen Waffen werden als Heim-Accessoire dekontextualisiert. Wie entrückt diese Waffenromantik ist, realisiert man, wenn einem im selben Augenblick zerbombte Wohnzimmer in Gaza oder Kobane in den Sinn kommen. Auch die Serie »Umschläge« (2011 – 2012), eine Sammlung von Covers der DDR-Zeitschrift *Armeerundschau* verweist auf eine ähnliche Entrückung. Die Serie zeigt jeweils Titelbild und Rückseite des Magazins, das Bild eines Militärmanövers und eines züchtigen 1970er-Jahre-Pin-Ups. Irritierend ist die Mischung aus fröhlich-lasziver Mimik der Frauen gegenüber lodernnden Flammen oder rollenden Panzern. Diese aus einem Bibliotheksarchiv stammenden Bilder führen einerseits gängige Geschlechterklischees vor und den vermeintlichen Gleichstellungsansatz im Staatssozialismus ad absurdum. Sie stellen aber auch den propagierten und gelebten Militarismus zur Schau, der uns in seiner Historizität im Heute konfrontiert und ratlos macht. Einmal mehr zeigen die Ausstellungen, wie durch geduldige Aneignung historischen Bildmaterials Fotografie nach ihrem impliziten psychologischen, politischen und mediumsrelevanten Gehalt befragt werden kann.

- 1 Peter Piller, »nach auflösung örtlicher frühnebel«, in: Thomas Seelig (Hrsg.): *Peter Piller Archive. Materialien (G)*. Albedo (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König 2014), S. 58.
- 2 Peter Piller im Interview in: »tft – titel, thesen, temperamente«, ARD, 18.1.2015. <http://www.daserste.de/information/wissen-kultur/tft/sendung/wdr/piller-18012015-100.html>. [Stand: 20. 2. 2015]

Willem de Rooij

Arnolfini, Bristol, 21. 11. 2014 – 8. 2. 2015

by Francesca Laura Cavallo

Filtered by expert editors, the images that we see everyday in the international newspapers are mediated immortalisations of our collective experience of the world: they form a repertoire of human gestures, expressions, and emotions. Historically and politically connoted, they also vibrate with an aura of timelessness in the sense that they reiterate ad infinitum similar sequences of acts, dramas, and representations.

Newspaper images are the medium in Willem de Rooij's current installation "Index: Riots, Protest, Mourning and Commemoration (as represented in newspapers, January 2000 – July 2002)" (2003) showing at Arnolfini, Bristol.

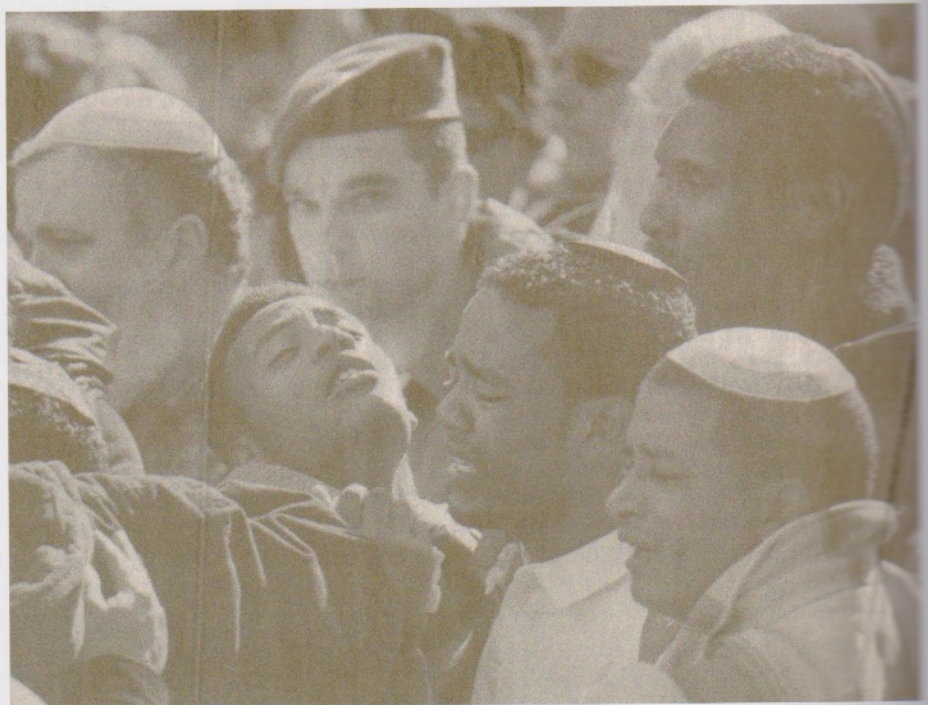
Composed against a white background in each of the eighteen large panels, photographs of "riots, protest, mourning and commemoration" are randomly grouped and de-voided of spatio-temporal references. Each single picture is powerful enough to engage the viewer; known and unknown faces evoke recent history, between 2000 and 2002, in depictions resembling more sapient dramatisation than reality: it is indeed a quality of photojournalism, that of transforming the spontaneous into the epic, the contingent into the universal. Yet, seen as a series, abstracted from the context that has generated them, these photographs of protest or commemoration seem repetitive, serial, like the versions of the same iconography that painters have elaborated over and over again. All together grouped around some unclear order, they form an "Index", as the title of the work indicates, a cloudy catalogue of conflicts, frictions, reclaimed futures, and remembrances in which we observe the human in the highest manifestations of its collective torment.

The installation is an extended collage whose significance lies beyond its direct references. Willem de Rooij is known for shows wherein he has curated other people's works and museum pieces – such as "Intolerance" (2010), where he combined seventeenth-century bird painting with ritual masks adorned with feathers, or "The Floating Feather" (2007) with works by several artists, including Isa Genzken – or for his own hyper-referenced film "Mandarin Ducks" (2005) made in collaboration with Jeroen de Rijke. De Rooij is an artist who can be appreciated by en-



Willem de Rooij, Index: Riots, Protest, Mourning and Commemoration (as represented in newspapers, January 2000 – July 2002), 2003. Installation view at Arnolfini, Bristol.

If detached from their spatio-temporal coordinates, protests and commemorations are also interesting manifestations per se: here the individual and the collective come together to express shared preoccupations and emotions, and here intimate feelings are performed in public with no shame. "Index" is a work where the sociopolitical is sublimated into typology and from typology into abstraction. Each image immortalises a political moment, but it is also a repetition of canons of representation and ultimately a surface where different, antithetic forces are put into play. The installation then becomes almost an allegory of frictions, a depiction of the essence of conflict: between individual and collective, between spontaneous and artificial, between truth and representation. In this sense it



Willem de Rooij, Index: Riots, Protest, Mourning and Commemoration (as represented in newspapers, January 2000 – July 2002), 2003. Photo AP / NRC Handelsblad 30-12-00. Courtesy: Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne/Berlin; Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Regen Projects, Los Angeles.

countering the puzzling combination of different systems of meaning that are enacted by his work. "For those who want to go deeper into the sociopolitical, there is a booklet accompanying the show that reconnects each image with its original context. The images are politically charged, as the press release says. Although, if there is something political about this work, I would assert that it is in the very disjointedness between the current issues and the subjects of the images.

is political, as it subverts the politics of representation, ethnographic collection, and classification. For this reason the work of De Rooij, by many easily disputed as curatorial and referential, cannot be dubbed with pure, simple appropriation. In a well-known conversation between Jörg Heiser, artist Christopher Williams, and Willem de Rooij, the latter declared his aversion for what on other occasions he has called *aboutness*² in art: to make interesting art.

it is not sufficient to make art *about* something interesting.

In his work, references are tools and not subject matter; they are materials orchestrated with precision to create a puzzling, intriguing assemblage where the viewer is invited to discover the artist's unique way of seeing the world. The white spaces between the images are instrumental to this very controlled orchestration of meanings: they create moments of suspension; they enable one to pick the thread between the various elements. "The desire for a work has to be created alongside the work",¹ as De Rooij has recently declared, and "Mandarin Ducks" was shown at the Dutch Pavilion at the Venice Biennale with half an hour interval. Emptiness builds up expectation, allows re-elaboration, critical thinking — all aspects that De Rooij's work certainly requires. The artist's control over his appropriated material is so present that each curatorial decision is an integral part of the work: the space between the images, the distance between the frames, the long descriptive labels. "Index" is paired with "Bouquet V" (2010), the label which specifically details each of the ninety-five different flowers presented. The immediate, striking beauty of the bouquet, an allegorical assemblage of different species, assumes a vibrant resonance surrounded by all these images of struggles, of which it seems to be a refined commemoration.

- 1 Jörg Heiser, Willem de Rooij, Christopher Williams, "As We Speak" (interview), *frieze*, 134 (2010), <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/as-we-speak>, accessed 15 January 2015.
- 2 Nicolaus Schafhausen and Willem de Rooij, "Art scene' is such a beautiful word", in Brigitte Oetker and Nicolaus Schafhausen (eds.), *Attention Economy*, vol. 60 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), p. 141.
- 3 Ibid.

Elizabeth Price: SUNLIGHT

Index, Stockholm, 29. 11. 2014 – 14. 2. 2015

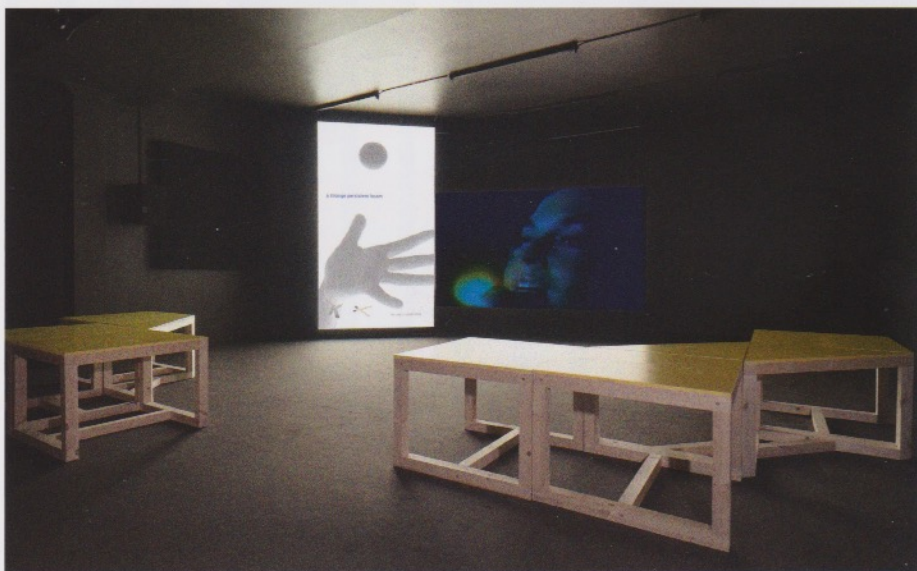
by Yuki Higashino

Images pulsate, gleam, and dance with each other in Elizabeth Price's video installation "SUNLIGHT" (2013). Disjointed and fragmented, they are sometimes suspended and other times jerk violently, their forceful succession accelerated by an equally unnerving and masterfully edited soundtrack. Presented in the low-ceilinged and rather corridor-like space of Stockholm's Index, the impression this piece creates is that of brightly coloured claustrophobia.

This might come across as a rather surprising description of a piece whose material at first seems relatively innocuous. The starting point of "SUNLIGHT" is a series of archival glass-plate slides of the sun that Price had unearthed during her residency at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in England. They were photographed in K-light, meaning that the light of high temperature is isolated, with the result being that the sun looks rather forlorn, depicted as a grey ball deprived of its radiance. These slides were taken on a mostly daily basis between 1875 and 1945. The tens of thousands of early photographs of the sun have been sequenced by Price to form a simple animation, and all the other elements in the video revolve around it, as though to reproduce the structure of the solar system.

Departing from these slides, Price assembled a collection of artefacts associated with the sun and/or light through visual, verbal, or cultural

puns. They include suntan oil, a crash cymbal with large "K" letter logo, package photographs from Wolford hosiery (one of them called "SUN-DOT"), or matches, either lit, burnt-out, or in their ship-branded box. The colour yellow frequently appears, as well as its chromatic opposite, blue. These artefacts are presented as highly manipulated images, often in black-and-white or in negative form, like the pictures of the sun. The edit is fast and repetitive, producing a music-like effect. A female pair of hands appears, black-and-white save for the nails, which are covered in bright yellow nail polish (or blue). They clap, snap fingers, spin the crash cymbals, or sort through the glass negatives — functioning as the joint between these disparate objects.



Elizabeth Price, SUNLIGHT, 2013. Double screen HD-video installation, colour, sound, 10'. Installation view at Index, Stockholm. Courtesy: the artist and MOT International, London/Brussels.

The installation is comprised of a double projection and specially designed seating. One of the projections is vertical and the other horizontal, with the screen of the vertical one almost touching the floor and ceiling. The animated sun is placed on the upper section of the vertical projection most of the time, conceptually and literally illuminating the rest of the video in its negative rays. Text runs right beneath the sun animation, either in yellow or blue. It starts as a fairly dry description of what is shown. However, its objectivity begins to unravel as it starts to repeat the sentences and becomes poetic, towards the end sounding more like song lyrics. The soundtrack is at first abstract and subtle, featuring a metallic rustling sound, perhaps a manipulated recording of the crash cymbal. Its intensity increases as the sound of snapping fingers is introduced, followed by snippets of a pop song with female vocals. The voice is incomprehensible and unsettling, and at one point we realise that it is reversed. Towards the end, footage of a pop singer on stage appears in the horizontal screen, presumably the singer of the song, juxtaposed with contemporary footage of an exploding sun. The text reaches its emotional climax, and the piece ends with a cascade of image, sound, and text.

As well as being an aesthetic and poetic exploration of the cultural meaning of the sun in everyday objects, the piece possesses a markedly menacing undertone. The video repeatedly presents anonymous women placed under glaring, negative sunlight: the models on the hosiery packaging whose faces are always turned away, the hands of a woman whose countenance is never visible, or the pop singer whom we never learn

anything about. In relation to representation of female figures in photography and film, the notion of light and illumination is neither a neutral nor an automatically positive concept. Illumination could invite exposure and objectification, which account for the claustrophobic impression produced by the installation.

One must note the significance of Price's practice in the context of current debate on digital technology and art. Infatuated by its versatility, the discourse on digital media, especially in moving images, often descends to vaunting its purportedly unique materiality (to be more precise, its lack of materiality). Indeed, many works discussed in this context often inherently address the nature of being digital. Ironically, digital im-

ages are enabling the rehabilitation of the language of medium-specificity. Moreover, as the art about digital technology and the Internet grows in popularity, the geek culture, which is ferociously male chauvinist, is uncritically accepted. In contrast, Price, whose deep understanding of the aesthetic and the potentials of digital image-making is evident from this exhibition, treats digital technology merely as a useful tool. She utilises many techniques considered to be the key aspects of digital art-making, including image manipulation, digitisation of archival material, and appropriation of infinitely vast material from the Web, yet she does not fetishise or thematise it but instead employs it as an effective format to investigate complex material and produce compelling imagery. In other words, her practice offers discourse that goes beyond the retrograde adaptation of materiality (or the lack thereof) to art made within digital culture.

Analyse und Ekstase

Paul Sharits. Eine Retrospektive

Fridericianum, Kassel,
23. 11. 2014 – 22. 2. 2015

von Rainer Bellenbaum

Die BesucherInnen, die sich im Projektionsbereich von »Shutter Interface« (1975) bewegen, sehen sich in einem komplizierten Muster zwischen den auf der Leinwand verteilten Flicker-Sequenzen als Schattenbild selbst auftauchen