

BRIGITTE KOWANZ

Von neuem anders, anders als es vorher war

Opening: September 2, 2020, 7 p.m.

Exhibition duration: September 3 – October 17, 2020

On August 3, 1984 at 10:14 a.m. the University of Karlsruhe received the first e-mail, which took almost a day to arrive. It was a greeting sent from Cambridge University in Massachusetts. In her new light installations Brigitte Kowanz zooms in on this particular date, presented here as a data trace transmitted in morse code. As such it offers a condensed view of the evolution of our digitalized world today and the rapid transformation of our communication. It was on March 21, 1991 that computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee presented the link to the world's first webpage. Both the Internet and e-mail emerged from the extreme acceleration of data transfer, information transmission and simultaneous distancing.

In Brigitte Kowanz's exhibition the advent of the Web and receipt of the first e-mail is shown together with other crucial turning points in recent history, which have triggered radical social and political change. The introduction of the YouTube domain in February 2005, the Paris UN Climate Conference in November 2012, the attack on the editorial office of the journal "Charlie Hebdo" at the beginning of 2015 – like a direction vector the effects of all these events radiate far into the future in both real and virtual space, while the data remain just dots on an abstract time line until they become transformed into neon objects. With the reflective background integrating the viewer, they produce new resonance by virtue of their numerical presence.

Brigitte Kowanz has long been interested in exploring the physical qualities of light, linking the medium with language and the subjective experience of object phenomena. She translates binary codes such as the morse alphabet into neon signs, underscoring the intermedial quality of light. Time and again, she highlights its unique quality of linking space and time. In *von neuem anders, anders als es vorher war* the ideas and strategies of her artistic practice are recontextualized in light of social changes. The selection of works is guided by the fact that even digitalization is ultimately based on the circulation of knowledge and its dissolution in imagery and signs. Only through recombination, semantic recoding and new formatting does something new emerge which, too, draws on references to things that already exist.

von neuem anders, anders als es vorher war addresses, in a condensed conceptual way, the transformation of language through the Internet and mobile technologies, digital image protests and the relationship of information of memory that calls to be examined anew. The artist is also interested in how the boundaries set by digitalization and technology are being extended into in-between spaces where subjective perception ultimately wins the day. Kowanz's gray, seemingly monochrome images do not reveal their composition consisting of dots, lines or squares until the surface is illuminated. Geometric codes dissolve in spectral colors when the onlooker moves. Reflective textile covered with paint creates these fascinating optical sensations and yet it is the light and in particular the eye's scanning and decoding that continues to transform the material into ever new visual manifestations. Though possibly described as a constellation, what we actually see eludes a description in words. Here Brigitte Kowanz is evoking an aesthetic cosmos in which the ongoing process of situation-linked perception yields to the unambiguous transmission of information, as these codes can only be revealed in the reality of here and now.

Vanessa Joan Müller, art historian and curator

Brigitte Kowanz (* 1957 in Vienna, lives and works in Vienna)

Since the 1980s Brigitte Kowanz is combining light and language to unique compositions. Brigitte Kowanz has held the professorship for "Transmedia Art" at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna since 1997. In 2009 she was awarded the "Great Austrian State Prize for Fine Arts" and in 2018 the German Light Art Prize. For her installation "United in Diversity" for the 13th Cairo Biennale she was awarded the "Biennale Prize 2019". In 1984 and 1995 she was represented at the Venice Biennale, in 1987 at the São Paulo Biennale and in 1990 at the Sydney Biennale. In 2017, Brigitte Kowanz created the installation *Infinity and Beyond* for the Austrian Pavilion during the 57th Venice Biennale.

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selection of solo exhibitions: *Lost under the Surface*, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, 2020, *Brigitte Kowanz*, Kunstmuseum Celle, 2018, *In Light of Light*, Jesuitenkirche Vienna, 2018, *Cut a Long Story Short*, Borusan | Contemporary, Istanbul, 2012, *in light of light*, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, 2011, *Now I See*, MUMOK Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, 2010, *Intervention*, Oberes Belvedere, Vienna, 2008, *Vo_lumen*, Kunsthalle Krems, 2007, *Energetische Resonanz*, Zentrum für Internationale Lichtkunst, Unna, 2005

selection of group exhibitions: *Neon Delight*, Zentrum für Internationale Lichtkunst, Unna, 2020, *Lichtparcours 2020*, Braunschweig, 2020, *Vergessen – Fragmente der Erinnerung*, Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, 2020, *They are Uttered and Left Unfinished*, All the Loves in the World, Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, 2019, *Contemporary Art*, Albertina, Wien, 2018, *Espace Européen pour la Sculpture*, Parc Tournay-Solvay, Brüssel, 2018, *The Reality Looks Different*, San Clemente Palace, Venedig, 2017, *Glassstress 2017*, 57.La Biennale di Venezia, Palazzo Franchetti, Venice, 2017, *Foto-Kinetik*, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, 2017, *Light Show*, CorpArtes, Santiago de Chile, 2016, Sharjah Art Foundation und MCA Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney 2015, Auckland Art Gallery, Neuseeland, 2014, Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London, 2013, *Neon*, MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rom, 2012, *Art, Architecture, Design – Austria Contemporary Art Exhibition*, Shanghai Art Museum, 2001, *Farbe zu Licht*, Fondation Bayerle, Basel, 2000, *Intervenciones en el espacio - Interventions in space*, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, 1995, *Viennese Story*, Secession, Vienna, 1993, *Westkunst*, Museen der Stadt Köln, 1981

selection of permanent installations: *Always A Way*, Zürich SBB, Zurich, *Lichtkreise - Libelle*, terrace - Leopold Museum, MQ, Vienna, 2020, *eighteensixtytwo nineteeneighteen*, Gustav Klimt | Wien 1900–p, private foundation, Vienna, 2018, *Morsealphabet*, Post am Rochus, Vienna, 2017, *Fountain*, Glanzstoff, St. Poelten, 2017, *Folding*, Norges musikkhøgskole, Oslo, 2017, *online*, Dorotheum, Vienna, 2016, *why how what when where*, Max-Planck-Institut for Chemistry, 2010/12, *Beyond Recall*, Staatsbruecke, Salzburg, 2010/11, *Museion*, Jüdisches Museum Wien/ Jewish Museum Vienna, Vienna, 2011, *Licht bleibt nie bei sich, kennt keinen Ort, ständig in Veränderung mit seiner; Umgebung*, DKV, Cologne, 2005, *Luz es lo que se ve*, MBA Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, 1995

selection of awards:

Cairo Biennale Prize, 2019
Deutscher Lichtkunstpreis/ German prize for light art, 2018,
Niederösterreichischer Kulturpreis/ culture prize for Lower Austria – honorary prize, 2015
Großer Österreichischer Staatspreis für Bildende Kunst / great Austrian State Award for Fine Arts, 2009
Österreichischer Kunstpreis für Bildende Kunst, Austrian State Award for Fine Arts, 1996
Preis der Stadt Wien für Bildende Kunst/ Price of the City of Vienna for Fine Arts, 1991
Otto Mauer Prize, 1989

exhibitions with Galerie Krinzinger:

von neuem anders, anders als es vorher war, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna (S)

Re_Union, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna 2017 (S)

Why Painting now?, Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, 2013 (G)

Brigitte Kowanz - Lichtinstallationen und Objekte, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna 1988 (S)

Aug um Aug, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, 1986 (G)

Brigitte Kowanz and Franz Graf, Galerie Krinzinger, Innsbruck, 1984

junge Österreicher/ young Austrians, Galerie Krinzinger, Innsbruck, 1980 (G)