



Maike Freess

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1965

born in Leipzig, Germany

1980-1985

Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig

1986-1990

Study and Diplom at Hochschule für Kunst und Design Burg Giebichenstein Halle

1990

Master

1991-1992

Study at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts Paris, Atelier Christian Boltanski

1997

teaching at Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Le Mans, France

lives and works in Berlin

Solo Exhibitions

2017

KORRIGIERTE ERINNERUNG, Samuelis Baumgarte Galerie, Bielefeld, (Cat.)

UNE OEUVRE D'ART AU COLLÈGE, Collège Charles Péguy, Monsange sur Orge / Collection du FDAC de l'Essonne, Frankreich

2016

TRANSITION, Performance, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain/MAMCS, Strasbourg

2015

VON BLINDER GEWISSHEIT (Of Blind Certainty), Von der Heydt-Kunsthalle, Wuppertal, Germany, 30.8. 2015 - 3.1.2016, (cat.)

2014

HYPNOTICS - Solo show, Joyce Gallery, Shanghai, China, 02.05.2014 - 26.06.2014

2011

DAS BLAUE VOM HIMMEL, Kunsthalle FRISCH - Halle am Wasser, Berlin (cat.)

VACUUM, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris

2010

LE DROIT DU PLUS FORT (with A. Sorbelli, Y. Liver, R. Labastie), Les Salaisons, Romainville

2008

EN FACE LE PIRE JUSQU'À CE QU'IL FASSE RIRE, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris

2007

DER TAG HAT KEINE SCHATTEN, DNA Galerie Berlin

2006

HAUTnah, G. Barbier, V. Corpet, M. Freess, C. Kai-Yuen from the collection Jean & Christina Mairet, Paris, Pferdeställe Postfuhramt, Berlin /ART FRANCE BERLIN (cat.)

2004

INSOMNIA, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris (cat.)

2002

HALLUCINATION, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva

I WISH I WAS HERE, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris

ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris (cat.)

2001

LED BY PLEASURE - MULTIPLY DRAMA, Rencontres Vidéo Art Plastique, Centre d'Art Contemp. de Basse-Normandie, Hérouville Saint Clair (cat.)

LED BY PLEASURE - MULTIPLY DRAMA, Le Crédac,

Centre d'Art Contemporain, Ivry-sur-Seine (cat.)

VOUS DANSEZ?, Institut Français de Berlin

2000

WHEN THE SUN IS SHINING, YOU CAN'T SEE THE STARS,

Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris

1999

YOU DON'T GET OUT OF MY MIND, Kunstraum Torstrasse, Halle

1998

TOUT IRA BIEN, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris

1996

38:2, Cité Descartes, Marne-la-Vallée

X-PEOPLE, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris

SPACECUBE, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Rouen

1995

MAIKE FREESS - INSTALLATION, Grassimuseum, Leipzig (cat.)

MAIKE FREESS - INSTALLATION, Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg (cat.)

1994

Galerie der Stadt Halle (cat.)

Galerie Efté, Paris

1993

FIAP Jean Monnet, Paris

Galerie am Wasserturm, Berlin

1992

Galerie Moderne Vergangenheit, Wiesbaden"

Group Exhibitions

2017

BONJOUR MONSIEUR MAGRITTE, Mazel Galerie, Brüssel, Belgien

KUNSTSCHORLE, Projektraum Ventilator, Berlin, curator: Axel Pahlavi

SALO V, Salon du dessin érotique, Galerie Episodique, Paris, Frankreich

2016

INTERMEZZO, Samuelis Baumgarte Galerie, Bielefeld

L'OEIL DU COLLECTIONNEUR / FOCUS 1: ÊTRE ET À VOIR - COLLECTION J+C MAIRET, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain / MAMCS, Strasbourg, Frankreich, (Kat.)

FOTOGRAFISCHE SAMMLUNG 1. Teil, Schloss Kummerow, (Kat.)

DRAWING NOW PARIS - Focus Maike Freess, Mazel Galerie, Brüssel, Carreau du Temple, Paris (Kat.)

KUNST FINDET STADT, Kunst im öffentlichen Raum, Halle (Saale)

SALO IV, Salon du dessin érotique, 24 Beaubourg, Paris

2015

ENGAGEMENTS - Collectionner/Partager - Privatsammlungen, Musée des Beaux-Arts Sainte-Croix de Poitiers, France, (cat.)

FABRIQUER LE DESSIN - FRAC Haute-Normandie, France

L'AMOUR, LA MORT ET LE DIABLE - UNE COLLECTION PARTICULIERE, Galerie des Hospices, Limoges, France,

THE FLAT, Mazel Galerie, Brussels, Belgium

LE NOIR & BLANC EN COULEUR, Centre de Cultures et de Ressources-LIZIÈRES, Epaux-Bézu, France

KORREKTUR-Maike Freess - Wuppertaler Performance-Nacht - Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal

ART FAIR KÖLN, Mazel Galerie, Brussels, Belgium

BLACKOUT, Mazel Galerie, Brussels, Belgium

2014

BUSAN BIENNALE 2014 - Main Exhibition, Busan Museum of Art, South Korea, Artistic Director Olivier Kaepelin, (cat.),

DIE NACHT DER PHILOSOPHIE, Maison de France / Institut français Berlin

VON 1900 BIS HEUTE - New presentation of the Collection, Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal, Germany

ELLES, Mazel Galerie, Brussels, Belgium

KENTUCKY KARAOKE, DMNDKT project space, Berlin, Germany

SALO 2, dessins érotiques, Les Salaisons, Romainville, France

SUR LE PAPIER, Mazel Galerie, Brussels, Belgium

DE LEUR TEMPS 4, ADIAF, private french collections, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes / HAB Galerie, France, (cat.)
ENCORE, 10 anniversary of Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, France

2013

SOON, Galerie Mazel, Brussels, Belgium

DE LEUR TEMPS 4, ADIAF, private french collections, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes,
Centre d'art Hangar à Bananes, France, (cat.)

CODE NOIR, 30 ans de shopping, Curator: Lidewij Edelkoort and Trend Union, FRAC Haute-Normandie, France

DRAWING NOW, Carroussel du Louvre, Paris, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, France,

SALO du dessin érotique, Les Salaisons, Romainville, France

DÉRANGE TA CHAMBRE 2, curator Museart Paris, Franconville, France, (cat.2),

2012

LIEBE, TOD + TEUFEL (Love, Death and Devil), collection J & C Mairet, Von der Heydt-Kunsthalle, Wuppertal, (cat.)

ANKÄUFE ZEITGENÖSSISCHER KUNST IM KUNSTFONDS 2012, Landesvertretung des Freistaates Sachsen beim
Bund, Berlin

WINTER GROUP SHOW, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, France

WIN/WIN, Acquisitions of Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen for Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Bau-
mwoollspinnerei Halle 14, Leipzig, Germany

MUSE, Gengenbach, curatet Aliseo Art Projects, Germany, (cat.)

LOOPINGSTAR 2012, video(art)festival Saarbrücken, Forbach, Germany

DÉRANGE TA CHAMBRE ! (1) - OU LE DÉSORDRE DOMESTIQUE DANS L'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Theatre Sarah Bernard, Goussainville, curatet Museart Paris, France, (cat.)

2011

MINE DE POUPÉES, SEMBLANT D'HUMAINS - Mannequins et poupées dans l'art moderne et contemporain
2010, (cat.)

APRÈS / Christian Boltanski + Guests, MAC / VAL - Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, France

QUAND L'ENFANT PARAÎT, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bernay

VIENNAFAIR 2010, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, (cat)

FIGURE-TOI !, works of the collection FRAC Haute-Normandie, Galerie La Passerelle Mont-Saint-Aignan

2009

INTERNATIONAL TRIENNALE OF SCULPTURE, Poznan, Poland, (cat)

FIAC Paris, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris (cat.)

HAIR DU TEMPS, Galerie d'art du Conseil Général, Aix-en-Provence

Salon du Dessin Contemporain, Paris, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, (cat)

2008

ÉCRIRE AU FÉMININ, works of collection FRAC Haute-Normandie,

Bibliothèque Elsa Triolet/Centre Georges Déziré, Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray

AUF DES MESSERS SCHNEIDE, Collection Jean & Christina Mairet, Rudi-Dutschke-Straße 18, Berlin

FIAC Paris, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, (cat.)

Salon du Dessin Contemporain, Paris, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva, (cat)

A SONG OF LOVE & LIVING FOR LIVING, Centre Culturel Français, Tblissi, Georgia, curator: Laurent Quénéhen

2007

L'IMAGE DE LA FEMME DANS L'ART CONTEMPORAIN, works of collection FRAC Haute-Normandie,
CRDP Haute-Normandie, Mont Saint-Aignan

FIAC Paris, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris, (cat.)

ART TORONTO, DNA Galerie Berlin, (cat)

DE LEUR TEMPS 2, french private collections, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Grenoble, (cat.)

LA GASTRONOMIE DANS L'ART: DE LA PEINTURE FLAMANDE À ANDY WARHOL, Artcurial, Paris (cat.)

dc duesseldorf contemporary, DNA Galerie, Berlin

VIVRE POUR VIVRE, UN CHANT D'AMOUR, British Artists' Film & Video Study Collection,

Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London

SIGNES DE NUIT, International Video Festival, Cinéma Balzac, Paris

2006

TRAITS POUR TRAITS, Artothèque de Caen, Caen

PLEASE WAIT, FRAC Ile-de France, Immanence, Paris, INHA, Paris

ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva (cat.)

AMOUR, GLOIRE & BEAUTÉ, Espace Art et Liberté, Paris, Charenton le Pont

VIVRE POUR VIVRE, video projection Gallery SAD, Moskau, curator: Laurent Quénéhen
UN CHANT D'AMOUR, ROMANCE, VIVRE POUR VIVRE, LE ROSE ET LE VERT, LOVE VIDEO,
video projection Kunstverein Mataro, Barcelona, curator: Laurent Quénéhen
2005

FIAC Paris, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva (cat.)
DESSINS ET DÉRIVÉS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris
NUIT BLANCHE, 1. and 2. oct., Mairie du 4ème Arrondissement, Paris,
1. oct. Espace Les Voutes, 13ème Arrondissement and open air projection, Paris
FEMMES DE TOUJOURS, Pôle International de la Préhistoire, Les Eyziers de Tayac
À TABLE(S), Domaine Départemental de Chamarande, Collection Chamarande (cat.)
LE MÉLANGE DES GENRES - CRÉATURES HYBRIDES ET MYSTÉRIEUSES,
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, FRAC de Haute - Normandie
DETROIT VIDEO FESTIVAL, Museum of New Art (MONA), Detroit, USA
ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva
A TABLE(S) Collection Chamarande, Domaine de Chamarande
FEMMES DE TOUJOURS, Pôle International de la Préhistoire, Les Eyziers de Tayac
Les éditions LE MASSACRE DES INNOCENTS - Philippe Ducat / Mai du Livre d'Art, Librairie Passages, Lyon
UN CHANT D'AMOUR, Cinéma de Barbizon, Paris

2004

FIAC Paris, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva
DE LEUR TEMPS, collections privées françaises, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tourcoing (cat.)
INNOCENCE AND VIOLENCE, Galerie Museum Ar/ge Kunst, Bozen (cat.)
Festival CINE POBRE, Gibara, Holguin, Cuba
5ème Festival des Films International, Izmir, Turquie
JEAN MAIRET - UN PRIVÉ AU TRIAGE / ART ET VIE QU'ONT FONDU, Le Triage, Nanterre
TROIS COLLECTIONS PRIVÉES, École des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes
MUESTRA NACIONAL DE NUEVOS REALIZADORES, La Havane, Cuba (cat.)
ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva / Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris (cat.)
MON MANÈGE À MOI, Galerie ÉOF, Paris,
UN CHANT D'AMOUR, Au Divan du monde, Paris,
Galerie CAD, Moscou, Schusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscou,
Club "Par", Saint Petersburg, Commissaire: Laurent Quénéhen

2003

BACKUP. AWARD, internat. Festival für neue Medien im Film, Weimar
DES OEUVRES, UN LIEU, FRAC Ile-de-France, Le Plateau, Paris
ROMANCE, Galerie CAD, Moscow,
<Nuit Blanche>, École spéciale d'architecture, Paris
NACHTZEICHEN - Open Air, Gustav-Gründgens-Platz, Düsseldorf
ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris
SIGNES DE NUIT, Cinéma Balzac, Paris
VOS PAPIERS !, Le Manoir, Cologny-Geneva
BLACK BOX, Video Festival Düsseldorf
COUPS DE COEUR, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva

2002

MICHIGANow, Michigan Institute for the Arts (MIA), USA
CITOYENS BOHÊMES, Le Printemps, Paris, curator: Catherine Ormen
THE PLAYTIME FESTIVAL, Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa
LES 7èmes VIDÉOGRAMMES - Vidéo à la carte, La Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille
GROUP SHOW, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva
DETROIT VIDEO FESTIVAL, Museum of New Art (MONA), Detroit, USA

2001

FEMMES, ETC., Abbaye du Ronceray, Angers (cat.)
LAS 24 HORAS, Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires (cat.)
RENCONTRES INTERNATIONALES PARIS / BERLIN (cat.)
NATÜRLICHKÜNSTLICH, Leipziger Jahresausstellung (cat.)
ART PARIS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris (cat.)

CYNETart 2001, Medienkulturzentr. Pentacon (cat.)
ARTETVITRINES, Rougier et Plé, Paris
2000
CARNAVAL, polylogue 25, Paris
CONNEXIONS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris
1999 ZWISCHEN DEN ZEITEN 2000, VT und Digitalart, Frankfurt am Main (CD-Rom)
CYNETart 2000, Medienkulturzentr. Pentacon, KunstHaus Dresden (cat.)
ART PARIS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris (cat.)
1999
WONDERFUL CATCH, The Living Art Museum, Reykjavík
PARCOURS DE SCULPTURE EN ILE DE FRANCE, FRAC Ile-de-France,
Fondation de Coubertin, Saint-Rémy-lès-Chevreuse (cat.)
1998
OSAKA TRIENNALE 1998, Osaka (cat.)
ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Pierre Hallet, Brussels (cat.)
St'Art 98, Strasbourg, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris (cat.)
1997
ART BRUSSELS, Galerie Pierre Hallet, Brussels (cat.)
SYMPTÔMES NATURELS, Galerie Corinne Caminade, Paris
PLUSIEURS EN SOI, polylogue, Paris
RÉSONANCE, ApARTé, Paris
SKULPTUR HEUTE, Galerie Marie-Louise Wirth, Zürich (cat.)
1996
KUNSTART 96, Bockenheimer Depot, Frankfurt/M. (cat./CD-R)
BAIGNADE INTERDITE, Seyssel
L'ART DANS LES CHAPELLES, Bieuzy-les-Eaux, Morbihan (cat.)
ZEITGENÖSSISCHE SKULPTUR, Landeszentralbank Sachsen/Thüringen, Leipzig
MANIF, Seoul (cat.)
BIENNALE DE LA SCULPTURE CONTEMPORAINE, Geneva (cat.)
SCULPTURE CONTEMPORAINE, Halle aux Toiles, Rouen
1995
SCULPTURES DANS LES JARDINS, Parc de Tancoquagnet
1994
1. INDEPENDENT ART FAIR, Naxos Union, Frankfurt/Main (cat.)
ASPECTS DE LA SCULPTURE CONTEMPORAINE, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Clermont-Ferrand (cat.)
SCULPTURES EN ÉCHO, Mairie de Lognes et CRDP de Créteil, Ministère de la Culture, Lognes (cat.)
KUNST AUS HALLE/SAALE, VEW AG, Dortmund (cat.)
DESSINS, Académie des Beaux-Arts, Paris
1993
EUROPÄISCHE KULTURTAGE, Karlsruhe
1992
Schloß Mainau, Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn (cat.)

Awards and Grants

2000
Appreciation CYNETart 2000, Kunst Haus Dresden
1999
Prize 1999 ZWISCHEN DEN ZEITEN 2000,
DigitalArt Gallery, Frankfurt/Main
1998
Bronze Prize Osaka Triennale 1998, Osaka
Hofgesellen, Lukashof, Halle
1997

Scholarship of Stiftung Kulturfond Berlin
1994

Prize Deutsche Telekom

Scholarship of Land Sachsen-Anhalt
1993

Scholarship of Stiftung Kulturfond Berlin
1992

1. Prize JEUNES ARTISTES AU FIAP, Paris
1991

Scholarship of Office franco-allemand pour la jeunesse, Bonn

Public Collections

2017

Kunstsammlung Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, Deutschland

2016

Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Deutschland

COROART / Kunstsammlung Coroplast, Wuppertal, Deutschland

2015

Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain / MAMCS, Strasbourg, Frankreich (Kat.)

2014

Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Deutschland

2012

Kunstfonds, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Deutschland

2009

Collection du Fond National d'Art Contemporain / FNAC, Frankreich

2004

FDAC de l'Essonne, Domaine départemental de Chamarande,

Collection Chamarande, Frankreich

2003

Collection du Fond Régional d'Art Contemporain / FRAC, Haute-Normandie, Frankreich

2001

Museum of New Art - MONA, Detroit, USA

1999

The Living Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland

1998

The Museum of Contemporary Art Osaka, Japan

Kunst am Bau / Lukashof Halle/Saale, Deutschland

1997

Collection du Fond Régional d'Art Contemporain / FRAC, Ile-de-France, Frankreich

1995

Kunstsammlung Deutsche Bank, Halle/Saale, Deutschland

Kunstsammlung Planungsbüro PAH, Halle/Saale, Deutschland

1994

Kunstsammlung Norddeutsche Landesbank, Halle/Saale, Deutschland

1992

Kunstsammlung STRABAG, Leipzig, Deutschland

Private Collections

Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Netherland, Luxembourg, Sweden, USA, Canada

Beate Eickhoff | THE SPLIT VIEW



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Maike Freess works in many artistic media: photography, video, sculpture, and installation. Her main field, however, is drawing. Her central motif – in all of her media – is consistently the human figure – concentrating mostly upon the classic, anonymous head or full-length portrait. Some of her works on paper are of overwhelming dimensions, reaching up to three metres, a feature more familiar in paintings on canvas. In addition to this size, there is the impressive hyperrealism of her drawing style, which also possesses an extremely corporeal presence.

Maike Freess has staged her exhibitions in such a way that all media interact, incorporating the space as well, and not only occupying the visitor visually, but drawing them into the work with their whole body. One is entirely unable to withdraw, becoming an agent oneself in correspondence with the protagonists in the spatial constructs of her pictures. In addition, her virtuoso handling of her drawing tools, together with the sheer, inexhaustible power of imagination, which finds and evokes new forms, motifs, and metaphors in every single sheet, has such a force that it is not aesthetic pleasure that makes one decide to look further into her works. Children, women, and men appear with expressive intensity, in spaces in which nothing is certain. They seem captured in dreamlike situations between waking and sleeping. They establish contact with their environment only hesitantly, feeling tentatively with their fingertips.

Maike Frees takes touchingly beautiful faces and well-proportioned figures as her starting point, yet in the process of drawing, in the touching of the paper by the artist so to speak, they start to transform. As if something repressed were being revealed there, a second nature that gets out of control: doll-like soldier figures march over a boy's back, a woman's stomach opens and all kinds of unappetising things emerge. The fantastic is mixed with the real. These are not surreal imaginings; rather, one receives the impression that these images are produced by a kind of [prophetic] x-ray vision. The skin of some beings comes loose as excrescences, spreading out in the image space. One sees limbs that grow apart from bodies, or foreign organs that adhere and attach themselves, distorted faces, people with artificial replacement joints. Spines and bones push through, some bodies are thin and seem literally not to be made of flesh and blood. Shadow creatures. The texture of pencil on paper is partly to blame for this consistency. And then there are the double hands, and double arms that resemble afterimages (one is reminded of Muybridge's locomotion

studies!). The retarding interplay of limbs looks as if it were guided by higher powers. Hands and fingers play an especially important role in balancing the body, cautiously feeling ahead and exploring one's own limits, and thus in the self-assurance of these beings within the visual frame. This also imparts a temporal succession to the picture, a sequence of movements, as if we were seeing a scene from a play. Like the people in her earlier photographic works from 1999-2004, the clothing of the protagonists is somehow oldfashioned, historical, and certainly strangely difficult to classify, a sign that the situations are anonymised and removed from our present time.

Maike Freess deals with what goes on in our heads; with images that we dream, that we remember. In a half-awake state, we are adrift from our own, real bodies, and involuntarily experience the past in a world of memory. This is not a world of true images, of truth, but instead of looking into the future in general, and in order to be able to live, our feeling and thinking must be determined by the positive. The negative must therefore be suppressed, wiped out, overcome. The images recalled in the imagination are accordingly subjective. The exhibition in the Samuelis Baumgarte Galerie bears the title: "Corrected Memory". This assertion is more of a question, an existential as well as psychological one, which Maike Freess pursues artistically. Because the fundamental theme of her art is, as she herself formulates it, "the person in their imperfect, limited and instable nature, their relationship to themselves, to their environment, to other people and society; the ambiguity of the human psyche".¹ A picture series that Maike Freess shows under this head is entitled "The Inheritors", in allusion to the inheritance of predispositions, the unwanted endowment passed on to us by our ancestors for our journey through life. We have to see what we can make of this, which is to say to retrieve our existence into the positive, as emancipated beings furnished with free will. We have to address our origins, our ancestors, time after time in order to recognise who we ourselves are and where our possibilities lie. It is not possible, however, to look into the present while turned toward the past. This is the dilemma that divides.

The artist visualises this divided view using the artistic method of the "paper cutouts" or "cuts", as she calls the paper collages she has invented. At first, these were strips of cut paper in black or white that make the drawing grow out from the plane of the image into the room. Cut with Constructivist severity, yet more of an Expressionist artistic form in their jagged lines, they traverse and criss-cross our view of the picture. One might think of those Cubist and Futurist experiments that took things apart in order to view them from different perspectives simultaneously. But that would be an excessively formal interpretation. It is much more the case that the "cuts" visualise the outside world, produce blank spaces, breaks and emphases in the continuity of presentation. The cuts" are at once facticity and suggestion. They describe turbulences and – in their defined form in the indefinite spatial structure – make visible the uncertainty and instability of a world in which there is more than one reality".² In her most recent works, she elaborates on the idea of the "cuts". In the portrait, picture halves shifted or askew from each other resemble a shattered mirror showing not one but many egos, and signifying a splitting of the personality. The break lines also bring to mind a cracked photograph pane, cutting and injuring the picture it is meant to protect. One is reminded of the tragic figure of Narcissus, who wants to admire his beauty in its reflection upon the water, but the image melts away, he cannot hold on to it. One might also think of the lonely narcissist when viewing the full-length figures, which are imprisoned in a type of housing: "The very narcissistic person has erected an invisible wall around himself", writes Erich Fromm, "he is everything, the world is nothing – or more accurately: he is the world."³ The next step from the "cut" leads to the collage. Fragments of reality or of dreams, souvenir pictures, are cut and new contexts, new unities are created through collage, entirely according to the will of the artist. For Maike Freess, it is a device that alludes to the possibilities of dealing with images. The souvenir pictures are arranged in new unity with the world – ad libitum and in the greatest subjectivity.

DIE ERBEN (THE INHERITORS)



DIE ERBEN 12 (THE INHERITORS 12)

various crayons, paper cut-out on paper
40 x 30 cm | Private collection | Bielefeld
2016



DIE ERBEN 14 (THE INHERITORS 14)

various crayons, paper cut-out on paper
40 x 30 cm | 2016



DIE ERBEN 15 (THE INHERITORS 15)

various crayons, paper cut-out on paper
40 x 30 cm | 2016



DIE ERBEN 17 (THE INHERITORS 17)

various crayons, paper cut-out on paper
50 x 40 cm | Private collection | Germany
2016



DIE ERBEN 16 (THE INHERITORS 16)

various crayons, paper cut-out on paper,
50 x 40 cm | private collection | Germany
2016



DIE ERBEN 23 (THE INHERITORS 23)

various crayons, copper, paper cut-out on paper
40 x 30 cm | 2016

Jeanette Zwingenberger | IMPOSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS



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Particularly in today's age of the selfie, in which encountering others is no longer the issue, but rather the staging of a narcissistic self-image, Maike Freess's portraits make us aware of the psychological spectrum of the human face. Her drawings bring its expressive possibilities to life with astonishing subtlety and sophistication, while at the same time bearing witness to the tragedy of confinement and impossible encounters that determines our current autistic world. Maike Freess draws mostly young people, on an apparently realistic level. In the close-up portrait "Coma" (2014) a girl stands upright, like a dreamer with closed eyes, her hands groping outward. She is hiding in a strange cabin, her body trapped behind a pane of glass. Only her outer limbs are unaffected by this rigidity. Is the physical person fusing with her mirror image here, or is it perhaps a struggle with the inner shadow? Maike Freess is not concerned with stories but with mental states. As an exact portraitist she is able to render a facial landscape with her pencil in a direct, almost anatomising way, and to bring about an intimacy with the figure that borders on the physical. The faces are often directed to the observer in a frontal view, but there is no encounter. Most of Freess's subjects have their eyes closed, and even if they are open – as in the close-up "Stigma" (2014), in which the dark rings about the girl's eyes become a mask – there is no eye contact. "I think about the blindness of the gaze and the deceptive effect of the outer appearance," said Maike Freess in conversation.

Her work oscillates between physical proximity and personal absence, symbolised by the remote gaze. Since 2002 Freess's vocabulary has preferentially revolved around adolescents. She is interested in the intermediate states of childhood and the confrontation with adult reality. She grew up in Leipzig, studying there and in Halle. At the age of 24 she experienced the collapse of the socialist regime. In the early 1990s she received a travel scholarship and spent two years at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris, in Christian Boltanski's multi-media studio. She was strongly influenced by Boltanski's sensitive and subtle way of dealing ethically with the Shoah from a personal point of view. Originally from Leipzig, she got to know the French way of life in Paris. This collision of realities sharpened her awareness of different political and social conditions. Her childhood was full of classical music, Bach and Haendel, and she sang in the Romanus Choir. In Paris, through dancing the tango, she developed a sense of concentration and rhythm that can also be found in her work: in the almost mathematical exactitude movements and absolute physical tension of her subjects.

These subjects experience disturbances, however. Their curious poses exemplify the difficult balance between different

states – of self-repose or self-loss, flowing energy or rigidity, being out of control or beside oneself. Freess is interested in “singling out and analysing psychological spaces with all their ambiguities”, in uncovering the peculiar and odd in everyday life, and the imperfections that depart from the norm or coded depictions”. The human being is pivotal – how we incarnate and encounter ourselves and others. In short, Freess’s portraits explore inner perception; they get under your skin. Her invented beings recall Kleist’s essay “On the Marionette Theatre”, in which he writes that the puppets’ complete absence of consciousness engenders a natural gracefulness. The strange attitudes of her figures betray inner, unconscious states. For Freess they are a metaphor for the way in which the strings of society manipulate us, throw us off course and turn us into marionettes. The motif of the pane of glass appears recurrently. In “Invidia” (2014) a girl sits on the floor with a pane of glass in her lap, while a hand seems to be within reach beneath it. The focus here is on the interrelationship of face and image, the living three-dimensionality of the body and the cold flatness of the glass, synonym for reflection. In this connection Georg Christoph Lichtenberg remarks: “For us the most entertaining surface on earth is the human face.”¹ With Maïke Freess, however, viewers come up against a frustrating pane of glass which makes them aware that we move in parallel worlds.

EXPLODED PICTORIAL SPACE

A boy wearing only underpants stands upright on a chair. His eyes are closed. There are walls around him that dissolve and unfold into individual segments reflecting strange shapes like an outside world mirroring his inner theatre. Maïke Freess turns the imaginative world inside out. It becomes an extension of the person standing unreachable in the centre of the spectacle. The lines of force between inner and outer signify a “figuration of tension” of body and surroundings which Maïke Freess understands as their extension. In contrast to the principle of focusing the deliberately framed composition of the photograph, Freess breaks up the visual axes of her drawings and operates with changes of perspective. She explodes the figure and its pictorial space through black, “empty” cracks, splinters, interstices and fault lines that fragment the visual narrative like a broken mirror. “They deny what they partly pretend to portray. They remain blotches, gaps or holes ... or blind spots. They replace the intermediate spaces in our memory and psyche as a duplicate layer, which is permanently present inside us. It marks the spaces that we can’t name, perhaps can’t even know, which unexpectedly and uncontrollably influence our lives, and our misunderstanding or incomprehension cause uneasiness, but perhaps also move us to explore them.”² Neo Rauch recurrently refers to the feeling of foreignness at home. But here Freud’s psychological concept of the uncanny applies to the divisions within an individual. In today’s global age the danger comes from the environment and in getting lost in virtual worlds. Maïke Freess’s disconnected worlds partake of the timelessness and placelessness that go along with disorientation.

OTHER WORKS



**LABORATORIUM DER ERINNERUNG
(LABORATORY OF MEMORY)**

graphite, paper cut-out on paper
250 × 150 cm | 2016



BLEIMOND (MOON OF PLUMBUM)

various crayons, paper cut-out on paper,
165 × 136 cm | 2016



REPARATUR (REPAIR)

various crayons, chalk, acrylic on paper,
250 × 135 cm | 2016



WEISSER ZEMENT (WHITE CEMENT)

graphite, paper cut-out on paper,
154 × 100 cm | 2016