

## Talking (about) images

Curated by Francesca Lazzarini and Marta Rovetta

Kunsthalle Graz

Graz, from May 29th to June 12th 2018



Alessandro Sambini, *Spelling Book*, detail, 2018

After its first stage at Galerija Kortil in Rijeka, the reflection on the role and power of images in contemporary society, between individual consciousness and mass culture, proposed by **Talking (about) images** continues in **Graz**, at the **Kunsthalle**, from **May 29th to June 12th 2018**.

The project, curated by **Francesca Lazzarini** and **Marta Rovetta** for **Cultural Inventory**, with the support of the **Region of Styria**, develops through four exhibitions and as many open laboratories with eight artists of various nationalities and different means of expression - **The Cool Couple**, **Severin Hirsch**, **Kate Howlett-Jones**, **Neža Knez**, **Maryam Mohammadi**, **Nika Rukavina**, **Alessandro Sambini** and **Christoph Szalay** -, exploring the relationship between images and the reality they represent, the mechanisms that regulate their production and diffusion, the ambiguities that they can generate, but also their potential as a universal and shared language.

In fact, unlike words, images do not require translations to be read by people in different part of the world, being apparently a limitless tool for global communication. Nevertheless, their interpretation is anything but objective: images are intrinsically ambiguous. Due to their power of persuasion, images play a key function in the capitalist and globalised system: they are vehicles for ideology and one of the main weapons in the struggle over an arena of strategic importance today, the collective imaginary.

So Talking (about) images focuses on images as an autonomous language, as in the work *Everyday* by The Cool Couple, which assembles meme GIFs reflecting on the influence on our existences of “secondary visibility”, the installation *Imag(in)e Ka-mi-ze* by Neža Knez, on images as a childrens’ mean to design a better future, the work *Lemmings* by Severin Hirsch, that spurs for an independent use of images and texts conceived as equal symbols, and Maryam Mohammadi’s *Memories Icon*, that explores the role of images in shaping personal memories as well as unconscious visual cultural effects; at the same time, the show reflects on the potentialities and limits of this language: on its interaction with other means of expression, as in Kate Howlett-Jones’s *Pocket Dictionary of the world’s Most Iconic Photographs*, where every

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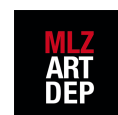


image-entry is defined by a poetic text resulting from mixed commentaries found from the internet and the installation *It's not your time to get your angel's wings just yet* through which Christoph Szalay takes the iconic story of Titanic, and its video game re-enactment as a starting point to resonate on representation and on the negotiation of the real, as well as on the responsibility related to its production and fruition, as in the video and the performance by Nika Rukavina, *The Illusion of Truth*, on the propagandistic and ideological use of images and the passive reception of their flow, and in *Spelling Book* by Alessandro Sambini, which presents the analogue outcomes of a machine learning process raising questions about the meaning of education and the responsibility of image-making.

After the first opening at the Galerija Kortil in Rijeka, the video installation *The Images of our Dreams* by Discipula has been included in the exhibition, building speculative scenarios concerning images and their relationship with human beings.

Afterwards, Talking (about) images will continue its journey to **Trieste, from 28 September to 18 November**, and finally in **Slovenia**.

In collaboration with: **Galerija Kortil, Kunsthalle Graz, MLZ Art Dep, Italian Cultural Institute in Slovenia, Austrian Cultural Forum Ljubljana, POIUYT and Association of Art historian of Rijeka.**

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Curated by Francesca Lazzarini and Marta Rovetta

#### Kunsthalle Graz

**Graz, from May 29th to June 12th 2018**

Opening: Tuesday, May 29th 6:00 p.m.

Conrad von Hötzendorf Straße 42 a

Hours: From Tuesday to Friday, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

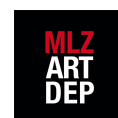
Free admission

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**The Cool Couple** (often abbreviated to **TCC**) is a Milan-based artist duo established in 2012 by Niccolò Benetton (1986) and Simone Santilli (1987). Their research focuses on the friction points that are generated daily in the relationship between people and images. The idea that images act as active hubs in a network, combined with a strong emphasis on production, results in the use of several forms of expression, ranging from fine art photography to electrostatic wipes, meditation rooms and Chinese cover-bands. TCC's works have been exhibited internationally at Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozzi, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Unseen Photo Festival, Centquatre, Les Rencontres des Arles, MACRO Museum. They were selected by Fotomuseum, Winterthur for Plat(t)form 2015. TCC received the Premio Fabbri for contemporary photography in 2014, the Premio Graziadei in 2015, the Premio Gruppo Euromobil Under 30 2017 and the Premio Fotografia under 40 Art Verona. Niccolò and Simone co-founded the cover band Rui & the Rainbow Dragons.

**Discipula** is a collective operating in the field of visual culture founded in 2013 by MFG Paltrinieri, Mirko Smerdel and Tommaso Tanini. Working across a range of practices, varying from publications and art installations to commissions and education, Discipula focuses on the exploration of the role and uses of images in the contemporary mediascape. The collective refers to images as political and economic tools, means of power and control whose ambiguous nature can be controlled to determine shifts in the perception of reality. With regard to this, Discipula pays particular attention to the role of the viewer as well as to the act of looking as a form of political conscience. Discipula's work have been exhibited internationally at Unseen Photo Fair - Amsterdam, London Art Fair, Matildenhöhe Darmstadt, FORMAT Festival - Derby, Kunsthalle Budapest, Tokyo Institute of Photography and more. Discipula is the recipient of various awards including Premio Fabbri 2016 and Les Rencontres d'Arles, Author Book Award 2015.

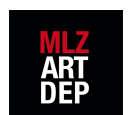
**Severin Hirsch** was born in Celje, Slovenia (then Yugoslavia), she attended the School of Design, Graphics and Photography in Ljubljana. Based in Graz since 2003, she worked as photographer and restorer before she started to investigate in the field of the arts and completed the Meisterschule für Kunst und Gestaltung/Malerei with Professor Erwin Talker in 2013 in Graz. She works between media art, installation and painting. Her photographic works deal with social change and change of values. Her artwork was honoured with the Art Promotion Award of the city of Graz in 2016.

**Kate Howlett-Jones** was born in 1971 and grew up in London. Following a Master's in French and Russian literature at the University of Oxford (1989-1993), she moved to Austria in 1999. Since then she has been active in Graz as a text artist and writer. In 2013 she co-founded The Daily Rhythms Collective, a platform for international, interdisciplinary woman artists based in Graz. Recent exhibitions and public space projects include Shifting Constellations (Minoriten Graz 2015), Rose of the Winds (Sarajevo, Trieste, Graz 2015), Verfolgt, beraubt, vertrieben (rotor 2016), sublim (esc medien kunst labor 2016), Stories from the Edge (MLZ Trieste, Galerie Kortilj and Kunsthhaus Graz 2016), steirischer herbst 2016, Erzählungen der Ankungsstadt (rotor 2016). She works between text, objects and installation. Her works deal with the artistic dynamics of language and narrative as they interact with visualization and space.

**Neža Knez** was born in Ljubljana in 1990. In 2014 she graduated in Sculpture at Academy of Fine Arts and Design, where she is currently studying a master's program under the mentorship of professor Jože Barši. She works with different media, such as audio, video, photography, with her own body or with the bodies of other, drawings and classical sculpture. She is the recipient of prominent awards: Recognition for outstanding academic achievements, Award for outstanding academic achievements Academy of Fine Arts, University of Ljubljana, Award for an innovative approach to the graphic arts, Prešern's award of Academy of Fine Arts and she was nominated for important award OHO (the prize was established in 2006 by the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Institute (Ljubljana) in cooperation with the Foundation for a Civil Society (New York). Her art practice is represented at home and abroad, with cooperation on residency or with exhibitions.

**Maryam Mohammadi** is a documentary and staged photographer. She holds a Ph.D. in Visual communication and Photography, JEP university. She taught at Tehran University of Arts for many years, and has exhibited widely in Iran and in Europe. She has lived in Graz since 2009, where she received the city Art Funds Prize. Her work focuses on how social, cultural and religious conditions at both local and global levels affect women. Also, how these effects are inscribed into their biographies and identities. Occasionally she is also an illustrative object to reflect her process of socialization in different societal systems. For the last few years she has worked in intercultural youth centers, feminist adult education, women and migrants counseling. Since 2015 she has been part of the Graz Women's Council.

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**Nika Rukavina** was born in 1980 in Rijeka, Croatia, where she lives and works. She holds a BA in sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice and works in different media from performance, installations, painting, sculpture and video. Her primary interest is trying to find a different perspective on commonly accepted views. She has exhibited at: Kunsthaus, Graz, Austria; Magazzini del Sale, Venice, Italy; Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, Croatia; Pyramida, Tirana, Albania; Cultural Center, Belgrade, Serbia; Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales, UK; Gallery A+A, Venice, Italy; Gallery Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, Italy; Gallery Nuova Icona, Venice, Italy. She is one of the winners of the Ivo Kalina Award, the city of Rijeka art award for the best exhibition in 2009 (VIA international art project).

**Alessandro Sambini** (Rovigo, 1982) lives and works in Milan, where he moved after graduating in Art & Design at Libera Università in Bolzano and further to completing an MA in Research Architecture at the Visual Cultures department of Goldsmiths College, University of London. In Milan, he started working with images, video and mixed media, exploring the needs and modalities that regulate the production of new images, their circulation and dissemination, and the various relationships that exist between the image itself and its viewers. His works have been exhibited in major museums such as MUSEION, FORMA, MUFOCO, MAST, MA\*GA, La Triennale di Milano and at the Kunsthaus in Graz. He was selected by Fotomuseum, Winterthur for Plat(t)form 2017.

**Christoph Szalay** was born in 1987 in Graz. He studied German (Language & Literature) at Karl-Franzens University Graz and Art in Context at University of Arts Berlin. Writer, performer, curator. Recent works include: SPACE=WOW (BUT I STILL MISS YOU, EARTH), publication at Spacecrag Press 2017 as well as a performed piece at Minoriten Graz and Musiktheatertage Wien, Werk X, 2017 / When I think of Palace, threepart lecture at Forum Stadtpark & Steirischer Herbst 2016 / Re-Considering Trieste or OH, HOW I WANTED TO BE YOUR BABY (but you wouldn't let me), limited publication of 100 pieces for the AiR Trieste 2016 / Alex&der Mond, children's book with drawings by Lisa-Maria Wagner, Lugschacht 2016.

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