

# Frieze

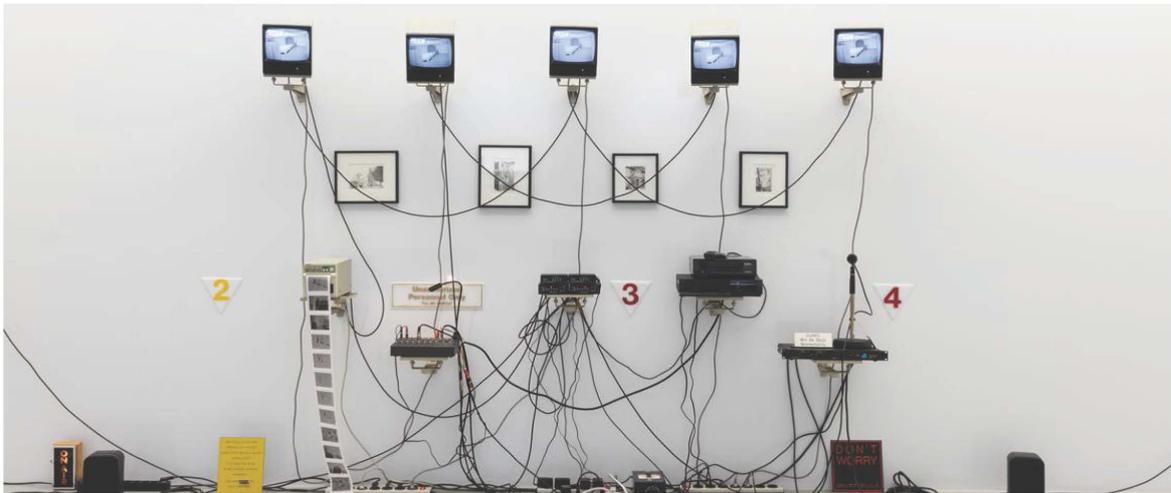
## Studio for Propositional Cinema



BY MORITZ SCHEPER

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Recently, a friend was thinking out loud about how digital culture has changed the exhibition format: Isn't it the case, he said, that an increasing number of artists and curators are trying to move away from the ideal of the static, stable exhibition? I was reminded of this while walking through 'in relation to a Spectator:', an exhibition on the ground floor of Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, in which the Dusseldorf-based artist, curator and publishing collective Studio for Propositional Cinema (SPC) question exactly what an exhibition can be.



Calla Henkel and Max Pitegoff, *Reading Bench (Grey)*, 2013, installation view, Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, 2017. Courtesy: Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover; photograph: Raimund Zakowski

Four archetypal exhibition structures – stage, table, wall, book – form the basic infrastructure of the show, which gathers together works from 31 artists and artist groups who are connected with either SPC or Kestnergesellschaft. The exhibition will continually evolve over time: only a select few pieces will remain on display for its duration, with the majority being presented for limited periods – extremely limited, in the case of the performances. This complex structure is surprisingly coherent, with the potentially sprawling concept held together by SPC’s lengthy, eponymous text ‘in relation to a Spectator:’. The sequence of instructional statements, assembled in the propositional style of Lawrence Weiner’s *Statement of Intent* (1969) and presented on four large panels at the entrance to the institution, attends to the transformation of scripts into inscriptions, scenography and duration – and their various interrelations.

While the subtle construct of the exhibition puts the many hypotheses of SPC’s text to the test, it also acts as a meditation on the exhibition format itself. The set-up of stage, table, wall and Calla Henkel and Max Pitegoff’s *Reading Bench (Grey)* (2013) suspends the sense of certainty that is usually associated with the museum as an institution. There is no

conserving spirit, no immobilization of objects, and the relative emptiness of the rooms points to the overwhelming likelihood that one will miss large parts of the exhibition. (On my list of missed opportunities: works and performances by Anna-Sophie Berger, Paul Chan, Keren Cytter and Luzie Meyer, amongst others.). But this feeling of 'loss' is balanced by the highly personal, unique experience of interacting with an exhibition that is constantly shedding its own skin. Furthermore, the included works fit the concept perfectly: Rachel Harrison's cement-coated polystyrene and wood sculpture *Framing Device (Yellow)* (2014), for instance, extends its thread to the wall, freeing the partition from its archetypal isolation and wrenching it back into Euclidian space. This same room is permanently watched over by Julia Scher's installation *The Schürmann House* (1991), a functioning CCTV-system that once again posits the visitors' own presence as the show's main event. The scripting of images, which is so central to SPC's practice, also features in Irena Haiduk's performance *SAY CAMERA* (2017), when a disembodied voice speaking through a medium describes the eye of Medusa as a camera that kills everything it sees. Jeff Wall's peculiar bobbin *Double Odradek* (1994) attends to the relationship between the written word and image in a less immediate manner. The sculpture originally served as a prop in Wall's photograph *Odradek, Taboritská 8, Prague, July 18, 1994* (1994), which in turn deals with the enchantment of an object described in Franz Kafka's short story 'The Cares of a Family Man' (1919).



Rachel Harrison, *Framing Device (Yellow)*, 2014, installation view, Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, 2017. Courtesy: the artist, Greene Naftali, New York and Meyer Kainer, Vienna

The strongest of the works included in 'in relation to a Spectator:' is Aaron Flint Jamison's *YU Contemporary vs Dept. of Revenue Oregon & Mult Co. Assessor* (2017), a matter-of-fact transcript of a 2016 court case in which the artist had to defend the public value of his contemporary art space, Yale Union, in order to avoid a colossal property tax liability. In this work, Jamison manages to evoke an event with a strongly cinematic quality while also alluding to more fundamental concerns. Like what's art and what's not. Or all the things an exhibition can be.

*Translated by Nicholas Grindell*

*Main image: Julia Scher, The Schürmann House, 1991, installation view, Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, 2017. Courtesy: Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover; photograph: Raimund Zakowski*

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#### **MORITZ SCHEPER**

Moritz Scheper is a writer and curator based in Essen, Germany, where he works as artistic director at Neuer Essener Kunstverein.