

Julia Prezewowsky and Kym Ward

Opening Friday, December 10, 2010, 7 p.m.
Showing December 11, 2010—January 15, 2011
at Stedefreund, Dorotheenstr. 30, 10117 Berlin

Part 1 of the exhibition series FLIP SHIFT SHOW SWITCH: Transitions in Showing

“Success is a question of communication.” This dictum frequently appears, in myriad variations, in the fields of management or personal coaching and communication training. It is meant to convince individuals to rethink themselves and improve the way they present themselves to the world. The sentence also makes a claim that is formulated to be completely all-encompassing. In a performance-oriented media society, an enormous amount of value is placed on the public representation of individual accomplishments. The marketing of the self becomes the central element of a successfully lived life. The artist’s profession was long considered one of the few opportunities in such a thoroughly regimented world for finding individual forms of expression and taking autonomous positions.

Given the immensely enhanced power of definition wielded by the market, which treats artists’ names like brand names and is constantly in search of new talent, the artist’s role in society has changed. “The performative compulsion that dominates the fashion and film industry is encroaching on art. ... The authenticity of the artist’s work is determined by whether he or she is compelling, capable of presenting a personality that illuminates the work and certifies it to be interesting, relevant, extraordinary or meaningful. A sort of subjectification of art, correlating with the objecthood of the artist,” writes Isabelle Graw. The artist’s sales strategies are heavily oriented toward consumer impact and performative structures of presentation, as well as the impression of a self-confident artistic ego. The new myth of the artist operates inside ambivalent structures: between ideal-typical, preestablished forms of behavior and, within those, a pointedly individual performance.

In their exhibition, Julia Prezewowsky and Kym Ward ask: What are the parameters, gestures and forms of such a performance? Their understanding of “performance” very much includes both senses of the word, as staging and as accomplishment. How does one best present oneself? Which performance will lead to success? What form does it require? The artists combine formal and conceptual aspects of various presentational strategies in their installation, and they propose promising options for constructing the subject. The search for representation and distinction is often faced with a residue of inadequacy, a failure to manifest sufficient individual presence. What emerges in this transition between the definition of form and the actual performative act is, in the exhibition PRE-FORMED, an open question.

Text: Anne Fäser

Kym Ward (b. 1982, Sheffield) studied sculpture at the Chelsea College of Art & Design. She lives and works in Berlin and is currently participating in the Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt. Her performances and installations address themes such as work, daily life and the absurdity of repetitive tasks.

Julia Prezewowsky (b. 1982, Berlin) studied sculpture at the Chelsea College of Art & Design. She lives and works in Berlin. In installations, sculptures and performances that are frequently determined by their contexts, she deals with modern rituals, social power structures and processes of examination and transformation.

Both artists are founding members of the Transidency artists’ collective and have previously collaborated on a number of projects. <http://www.transidency.org>

Lecture: PREP TALK

Thursday, December 16, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

Petra Schwarz (journalist and moderator), Ludgar Brink and Gabriele Brähler (Klub der Berliner Meisterredner/Toastmasters International) share their training methods for presentations and public speeches.