



*Kate Durbin, Hello Selfie!, Documentation of a performance, 2015 / courtesy the artist / photo © Jessie Askinazi*

## **PORN TO PIZZA — Domestic Clichés**

Curated by Tina Sauerlaender, *peer to space*

PREVIEW PIZZA PARTY September 4, 2015, 7 - 10 PM

ARTIST TALK September 6, 2015, 3 PM

With coffee and cake and in English language

CURATOR´S TOUR & TALK September 18, 2015, 4 PM

EXHIBITION September 5 to October 24, 2015

### Works by

Anthony Antonellis (US), Kim Asendorf and Ole Fach (DE), Domenico Barra (IT), Petra Cortright (US), Kate Durbin (US), Carla Gannis (US), Laurence Gartel (US), Emilie Gervais (FR), Claudia Hart (US), Paul Hertz (US), Faith Holland (US), Lindsay Lawson (US/DE), Jessica Lichtenstein (US), Patrick Lichty (US), Mark Napier (US), Eva Papamargariti (GR/UK), Angelo Plessas (GR), Hayley Aviva Silverman (US), Cornelia Sollfrank (DE), Jonny Star (DE)

## **PORN TO PIZZA — Domestic Clichés**

Many things sustain our personal comfort zones—eating delicious food, cuddling with cats, decorating homes, having sex, watching porn on TV and the Internet.

Porn, Pets, Plants and Pizza, the 4P of domestic clichés, broadly found their way from real life into the virtual space of the Internet. The World Wide Web became part of our daily surrounds. We are permanently linked to the world outside our living room. Information comes in and we post personal things and experiences. Domesticity extended from IRL to URL. But the Internet is not a mirror of real life, it is a hyperrealistic version. Like filling a photo album, we single out images, posting only the funniest cat video, the most arousing sex tape, the yummiest food or the coolest selfie.

In addition, photographs and digital images merge on our screens. Fictional and real world objects stand right next to each other. And some virtual simulations imitate reality to the extent that they can no longer be distinguished from photos. But how then do we know the truth? Imagery in the age of the Internet requires a change of thinking. Everything we see is real, because we see it, no matter how it is fabricated or which “parallel world” it belongs to. In terms of domesticity, this is especially hard to admit, because human behavior is deeply rooted in the sensual and tactile and not only in the visual: like eating, cuddling or having sex.

Artists working with the Internet or digital means haven taken up the hyperrealistic images and the problematic of the real to reflect on the Internet’s and the Digital’s impact on today’s domestic spheres and personal comfort zones. Some artists exaggerate this imagery or play with the amateur aesthetics of found footage or YouTube videos to satirically emphasize the difference between the banal imagery and high art context. Others develop contrasting domestic versions and mix IRL and URL. The digital creation of objects and their surfaces plays an important role as well as producing real life sculptures with new materials in the context of the Internet and its virtual characteristics.

These artworks often reference Pop Art with its inclusion of imagery from daily life or mass culture in art, the use of banal, comic, or even kitschy elements, exaggeration and irony, the appropriation of found materials, collage, mechanical (re)production, or experimenting with new techniques of materials from other contexts.

The exhibition *PORN TO PIZZA — Domestic Clichés* presents varied ways of artistic production in the age of the Internet, dealing with its features and its impact on every day culture. Here, domesticity is a very pervasive topic, because it reveals how private daily life has changed with the Internet and how the conflict of the “real vs. virtual” invades our personal comfort zones.

## THE REAL AND THE FAKE

With her series *The Real and The Fake* **Claudia Hart** combines photographs of real life food with digitally created renderings of apples. The visual appearance exposes the apple as a virtual object, but also indicates, that the simulated fruit could also be made so realistic that it couldn't be separated from a real apple anymore. Both are part of the same reality now and indexical reference is not important anymore. The apple is there, no matter how it is created. A selection of works from the series *The Real and The Fake* will be presented in a new installation. Displayed on digital photo frames on a household rack, the digital images will become part of a domestic IRL setting in the white cube of the gallery space.

In her series *Towards A New Shiny Internet Domesticity*, first exhibited online at “Panther Modern” in 2014, **Eva Papamargariti** creates a virtual domestic space full of objects taken from the real world, like plants, shelves or a yellow little rubber duck combined with impossible objects, that would not exist or could not be built in the reality. Here they are included in one and the same virtual space. The icon of a computer hangs on a shelf next to a shiny abstract object. A plant, an emoji, a pillow, all digital, float on our screens. The work shows the twisted materiality of organic and artificial language. Can a rendered environment create a sense of familiarity or even be more indulging than a real surrounding?

## NEW MATERIALITY

**Hayley Aviva Silverman**'s work *You asking me about my drinking but not about my thirst* (2014) is part of a series of resin-poured soup bowls that transform edibles into an aesthetic experience. Nothing spoils. Nothing ages. Therefore they are similar to the way a digital rendering would be perceived: Although these soups look like real, they cannot be eaten. With the work title, Hayley Silverman refers to the Scottish Proverb and the song *They Speak Of My Drinking, But Never Of My Thirst* by The Menzingers. Things cannot be understood while looking at the visual surface only. The true needs and motives are to be found in another layer or perspective. Together with the seal figurine the works also evokes global environment issues, as these animals are a highly endangered species — the soup is both a warning and a pre-dated fossil containing the memories of the earthly world and its sustenance.

**Lindsay Lawson**'s sculptures resemble vases at first sight. Actually they are objects made of plaster, pigments, resin and different items like jeans, packing peanuts packings or wire mesh—describing our contemporary culture and the personal surrounding of the artist. Lindsay Lawson turns the culturally inherited shape into a non-object of utility. Just like an image of vase, this object cannot be used as a vase. Further, the artist negates the characteristics of the vessel by leaving out the outer shell and giving her objects an inner life instead.

## **PORN**

**Laurence Gartel's** *Electronic Nudes* belong to the earliest computer-based artworks dealing with nudity and the abstraction of human body in electronic art. Starting in the 1970s, the artists experimented with the Paik/Abe colorizer and the Rutt-Etra-Izer, a machine for video raster manipulation. With this apparatus he manipulated images by bending and distorting the horizontal and vertical axes. Afterwards the artist photographed the screen to obtain the final work. Gartel's *Electronic Nudes* anticipate today's digital manipulation of the human body and the abstract esthetics of computer-based art.

**Mark Napier's** series of generative artworks, *PAM – New media Venus* (2009), algorithmically transform Pamela Anderson's fragmented body parts. Inspired by the beauty of mythological Venus, goddess of love and libido, already painted by Ingres, Titian or Velazquez, Mark Napier creates a Venus born in the digital age. His work not only refers to Pamela Anderson as sex icon widely distributed in the Internet, but also to the digitalization and abstraction of the human body in general.

**Domenico Barra** combines found footage, glitches and moving images in his works and creates abstract, highly distorted versions of pornographic material found on the Internet. Presenting his work *PiratePornoMaterial2nd* on a website the user has to actively scroll down and not only watch. The work is part of Barra's "Dirty New Media Projects" creating new ways of depicting and perceiving porn, new aesthetics and raising discussions on politics, economy and aesthetics of contemporary sex depiction with a focus on online pornography.

**Jessica Lichtenstein's** work *Lady Luxury* is made of Japanese anime figures the artist purchased online, being aware, that usually men buy these as fetishized objects of female bodies. Jessica Lichtenstein re-contextualizes these pornographic objects by adding accessories from daily life to each figurine. Lichtenstein takes them away from the male view to another, female context and narrative to change people's perception and have them questioning their ideas of sex and pornography.

*Hello Selfie!* documents **Kate Durbin's** performance in Chinatown, Los Angeles. It presents a new form of "passive aggressive performance art". In a public space, a large group of female performers, the artist among them, costumed in white underwear, wigs and studded with Hello Kitty stickers take selfies. They do not directly interact with the audience, but only with their phones. Passersby gawk and take their own selfies with the girls. The selfies are then uploaded to social media and shared in real time. Kate Durbin's performance combines a girlish sexy aesthetic with feminist performance or public interventions in the tradition of Vanessa Beecroft. The artist also shows that the (almost) naked female body can play other roles and be depicted apart from male fantasies. Kate Durbin's work further underlines the merging of real life and the Internet as well as a kind of alienation or lack of necessity communicating in real life.



With her work **Jonny Star** delves into the relationship of art and everyday life. She questions conventional forms of gender identity and their roles in societal perception. Since 4 years, she works under her artist name personally experiencing how this new identity is bound to gendered definitions. For her series *Sex Sells* Jonny Star took screenshots of Internet porn videos, printed these images on fabric and stitched them on embroidered table cloths, which evoke the aesthetics of typical German apartments in the 1960s and 70s and therefore resemble an idyllic family life, where all so called abnormalities were swept under the carpet. By adding today's Internet porn of straights, gays or lesbians, Jonny Star renders sex socially acceptable claiming it as a normal part of life.

The *Selfie Drawings* by **Carla Gannis** reveal a multi-layered examination of the impact of the digital and the Internet on human life and our perceptions of reality. The artist reflects on her own identity and on female appearance in general, being well aware of the merging virtual and real worlds. The four selected works for the exhibition show the connectedness of a human being with her digital surroundings. Loneliness comes across in "Red Samsonite" an image depicting the artist sitting naked in a suitcase on a bed in a sparse room, photographing herself in the mirror. In "Leia" Gannis appears Kahlo-like linked with wires connecting her own body directly with a computer and smart phone. The works "peer-to-peer" and "AKIN" focus on avatar identity, where Gannis appears as a "geeky" Wonder Woman in a computer game and as a Second Life simulation with cyborg body parts that have replaced her human ones.

## PETS

In her works **Faith Holland** deals with virtual culture, sex, porn and technology in both analog and digital media. Her work reveals the intimacy of the relationships humans have with this profound invention called the Internet. Her work *Analog Internet* is a video-sculpture that reveals a pyramid of three-dimensional rendered CRT televisions, each with a different cat video appropriated from YouTube playing. *Analog Internet* re-imagines having the same relationship to cat videos in physical, not digital, space. Until now, the work only existed as a digital rendering. For the first time, an IRL version will be shown in the exhibition. Cat videos will be displayed on physical screens, pyramidally towered. YouTube (for example) functions like a digital monument to cats whereas a pyramid of TVs acts as an IRL monument. However, the cats will remain virtual. How does this change the relationship with the viewer? Will he want to hug these cute cats and touch the screen instead?!

**Patrick Lichty** created a series of *Random Internet Cat drawings* with a computer-controlled pen plotter. As the artist is interested in how reality is shaped through mediation in general, this series deals with the transfer from a digital image to a physical drawing. Within the process, a random element—a pen holder suspended by two toothed cables—generates a swinging motion that results in an 'imprecise' drawing style in the final work. A technique that points towards the idea of human gesture. Patrick Lichty conceived the RIC series as a playful satire on Internet culture, but also touches the critical issue of drones in some of the drawings. Patrick Lichty visualizes the drones as



little flies or birds the cat plays with. The alleged downplaying points to the Internet consumers paying more attention to all these cute cats instead of the controversial fields of applications for drones as spies or weapons.

**Petra Cortright**'s work *Puparazzi* (2009) is an early example for appropriating pets in art. A cute cat and a dog appear on the screen alternating and singing to the song *Paparazzi* by Lady Gaga. Both seem to sit in front of a laptop camera filming themselves. The music sounds as if being re-recorded from the computer speakers. Petra Cortright animated the physiognomy and movements of the two pets according to music and also let's the dog send kisses and the cat cry and puke. Taking up every day YouTube video aesthetics, Petra Cortright creates an ironic and hyper real work in which animals behave human-like in front of their laptops, combining IRL and digitally created imagery and performance. Further, the song the artist chose describes the ambivalent relation between a superstar and the press. Nowadays, the demand of being visible online to be successful does not apply only to superstars anymore.

## PLANTS

**Cornelia Sollfrank**'s *anonymus-warhol\_flowers* are images made with net.art generator using „Warhol flowers“ as search term. The net.art generator is an online computer program invented by Cornelia Sollfrank in 1999, accessible for every user of the Internet (<http://nag.iap.de>). By entering freely selectable search terms the generator creates new images consisting of found footage related to the keywords. The 'original' artwork by Andy Warhol also was an image the artist appropriated, copied and modified himself—from an photo of hibiscus flowers by Patricia Caulfield in *Modern Photography* magazine. Cornelia Sollfrank appropriates this appropriated image, not by herself, but with contemporary means, with an algorithmic and web-based computer program. The work addresses the possibilities of producing art in the digital age as well as the problems with copyright infringement occurring with appropriated images.

**Angelo Plessas** creates websites as artworks since 2000. The artist's imagery often consists of plain, rather two-dimensional geometric forms that resemble parts of the face, like eyes, nose and mouth, interacting with robot-, doll- or human-like figurines. His works evoke a philosophical and poetic atmosphere, often echoed in their titles. In his interactive work *BonjourTristesse.com* a single flower rotates in the middle of the screen. With every mouse click of the user, the color of the background as well as the shape, size and color(s) of the flower changes, oscillating back and forth to abstraction. Further the direction of the plant's rotation can be influenced with mouse over. The only element staying the same is the white stem. With every mouse click another tone comes up. The sequence of sounds results in a staccato succession of high-pitched, dull, deep or bell-like tones. With the pace of his clicking, the user brings in his own dramaturgy. Endless combination options are revealed.



## PIZZA

**Emilie Gervais** is interested in structural issues of visuals. In her digital works she often contextualizes found footage of 1990s with other ‘semantic layers’. She states that changing the esthetics and content leaves the structure unaltered. This applies e.g. to Jump ‘n’ Run or First-Person-Shooter computer games but also to digital artworks. For the exhibition, Emilie Gervais presents *\*Pizzasexual\**, a series of new gifs that combine two crucial human needs, sex and food.

The artists **Kim Asendorf** and **Ole Fach** who work together for several projects, like the Fach & Asendorf gallery, presenting artworks by their colleagues online, made a joint work for the exhibition, called *Yummy!* – In the Italian green, red and white color scheme of pizza packaging the artists printed photos of themselves on cardboard boxes: Kim Asendorf is “eating” an Apple computer mouse while holding a keyboard in his hand. *Yummy! highspeed media* says the text next to him. Ole Fach presents a MacBook Pro like in an advertisement, accompanied by the slogan *Yummy! fresh Internet*. Opening the boxes does not reveal a fresh and yummy pizza to be swallowed. The artists have turned the pizza box into a mere object, to be presented as an artwork on the white wall. By applying food characteristics like yummy or fresh to devices that connect with the virtual world of the Internet, the artists ironically but clearly state that the Internet’s role is as important as eating in human life now.

In *Star Trek Pizza Pool Party* by **Anthony Antonellis** a space ship floats into a YouTube video of shimmering blue water in a pool. A hand holds an Ipad, which displays The Next Generation’s character Data appearing as plate decoration. In another frame, several Mac screens show a pizza above the water and an Ipad with the plate. Next to the arrangement of the computers, some guys are dancing. The original dimensions of the IRL screens now appear totally oversized as huge virtual objects. The accompanying sound, a pop science fiction melody, seems to come out of broken speakers. All the different narrative layers merge into each other until road cones appear on each screen that end the *Star Trek Pizza Pool Party*. Anthony Antonellis challenges the definition of reality: Combining all ‘real’ elements—pizzas, plates computers and dancers—in one video frame, still the screens appear in an unrealistic mock size. What about Star Trek’s Data? We see and perceive him as an own entity with his own personality, he is there, no matter if he appears on the TV screen or printed on a merchandising plate. Reality consists of different layers or perspectives and in different media. But as long as we can see it, it is real.