

Body pt. 1 (zombie)

BERND & HILLA BECHER, GINA FOLLY, MARCUS HERSE, AUDE PARISET
& photographs from the LAPD ARCHIVE

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Ginerva Gambino is pleased to present *Body pt. 1 (zombie)*, with works by Bernd & Hilla Becher, Gina Folly, Marcus Herse, Aude Pariset, and photographs from the Los Angeles Police Department Archive. As the title suggests, this show marks the beginning of an exhibition series, to take place at the gallery once a year, referring to 'the body'.

A zombie is a fictional undead being created through the reanimation of a human corpse. The term comes from Haitian folklore, where a zombie is a dead body reanimated through various methods, most commonly magic. This figure was first successfully embedded into our popular culture in 1929 through William Seabrook's novel *The Magic Island*. Over time, the zombie's appearance changed from the living soulless corpses, directed by the will of others through Haitian Voodoo, to the so-called "modern zombie," created by George A. Romero's in his seminal film *Night of the Living Dead*. The monsters in the film and its sequels are often raised using tropes from science fiction such as radiation, mental disease, viruses, scientific accidents, etc., and are usually hungry for human flesh.

Aude Pariset's contribution to this show consists of a merger of two existing installations. Her piece *Planned Fall*, which she produced for the Biennale de Lyon in 2013, is combined with prints from the series *Last Spring/Summer*, which she collaborated on with Juliette Bonneviot. Based around the idea of programmed obsolescence, it presents a scene with phantom characters wandering among banners whose fragmented images suggest the promotion of cosmetic products.

Marcus Herse's series *Galleria* comprises videos the artist created at various commercial complexes in the greater Los Angeles area. Herse navigates the interior spaces of shopping malls, seeing the public carrying out its actions on this elaborately constructed stage. The interplay of the passivity of the shopper and their programmed goal to acquire more goods reveals the mall as host to a consumerist excess.

Bernd & Hilla Becher's series *Typologien* (1960s - 1990s) captures archetypes of industrial architectures. Shot in a number of different locations across Germany, France, Britain and the United States, their iconic black-and-white photographs often show buildings that are no longer in use, about to be demolished or simply rotting away. Today, many of these photographs serve as symbols for the economic paralysis of former industrial areas. They portray modern ruins indicative of high unemployment rates in these areas.

Gina Folly's work *Unfinished Business (Ling Zhi) I - IV* is made up of Chinese mushrooms. Dried out and wrinkled, they can survive a long period without water but are easily reanimated by rehydration. The dried out wrinkly shape enlarges, and becomes smooth and soft when adding water. The mushrooms are used in traditional Chinese medicine as natural anti-aging products and are believed to extend our lives. As such, they stand for an economy of a new kind of zombie.

In his newspaper article "Körperkontrolle" ("Controlling the body", Die Zeit, Nr. 20, 13. Mai 2015), Caspar Schaller writes that Kim Kardashian is probably fulfilling the philosopher Julia Kristeva's definition of disgust. Disgust, says Kristeva, sets in, when boundaries blur, when something is no longer a subject but not an object. A corpse, for example, is an object, but still recognizable as a former subject. Kim Kardashian is obviously still a subject, but through the total revision of her body following the lead of our aesthetic canon, she appears like an object, robotic and motionless, a kind of zombie of the 21st century.

Seabrook's zombie novel invoked monsters and shadows through the scenes he depicted of superstition, and cultish

ritual in foreign landscapes. Similarly, the crime scene photographs from the LAPD Archive show us small simple points of evidence. Writing on a wall, a car in a garage, party decorations on a ceiling. The images from these crime scenes depict a creepy and uncanny void. The absence of humans fills the room with presumptions and fantasy, showing us how the origin of our monsters often comes from the fear of that which we know nothing or little about.

The zombie was created by humans to articulate a perceived subjection and service to our own greed. Similar to other fantasy creatures such as the Golem and Frankenstein, the zombie transformed into a monster by eating its master.

The works in this show exemplify different interpretations of the zombie theme from superstitious rituals to death and decay and to the ramifications of today's consumer society.

- Text co-written by O&C