Natascha Süder Happelmann works on German contribution for Biennale di Venezia 2019

Franciska Zólyom, the curator of the German Pavilion 2019, is working with the artist Natascha Süder Happelmann on the design of the German contribution for the 58th International Art Exhibition, Biennale di Venezia. Happelmann is fine arts professor at University of the Arts Bremen (HfK Bremen).

Natascha Süder Happelmann—the name is a pseudonym as part of the artist’s concept—is an important voice of contemporary art. “In her work she unfolds the poetic, imaginary and critical potential of art. She stands for an artistic position that not only analyses or comments on aesthetic and scientific concepts and social or political conditions, but actively changes them. Within each working process the artist develops a new understanding of her role and a new approach”, reads the announcement for the German Pavilion. Since 2014 she holds the professorship for sculpture (thinking as gestalt, form, formation) at HfK Bremen.

For the contribution to the German Pavilion 2019, Natascha Süder Happelmann works with a personal spokeswoman, Helene Duldung, and adapts her name especially for the task. The artist has evaluated a collection of various different names that have been used by official authorities to address her over the last thirty years. After careful analysis of the variations, which have arisen due to autocorrect programmes and misspelling, she has used algorithmic parameters and social protocols to select the most suitable version Natascha Süder Happelmann: An optimal form of integration.

Undermine the fetish of the “artist’s biography”
Disconnected from representative roles or political instrumentalisation has always been an integral part of Natascha Süder Happelmann’s artistic practice. As early as 2004, the artist initiated the CV exchange platform bioswop.net, where concepts such as identity, representation, facts and self are renegotiated and the fetish of the “artist’s biography” is undermined.

“I give her my sincere congratulations for this honorable task”, says HfK Bremen rector Roland Lambrette, “It is part of our digital life to operate with pseudonyms; it is common practice online to use code names, user names, avatars and even parallel, digital identities. Our colleague Natascha Süder Happelmann takes this one step further with her bioswap-platform and tries out artistic strategies to think outside the box and create masks for a game of identities.”

Happelmann primarily creates works in the fields of installation and performance, text and sound. As an individual or collective artistic position, she frequently allows her practice to flow into political, social processes. She addresses the activist aspect of artistic work and reassesses the conditions and spaces for aesthetic research and artistic action. The German contribution to the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is realised on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office in cooperation with ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen).

URL zur Pressemitteilung: https://vimeo.com/296402227
Natascha Süder Happelmann, right, and her spokesperson Helene Duldung, left, in front of the German Federal Foreign Office
Jasper Kettner
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