

Galerie Francesca Pia

THOMAS BAYRLE

Film

Video

Materialien

1989–1999

August 25 – October 18, 2018

Opening: Friday, August 24, 18–20h

Galerie Francesca Pia is pleased to announce Thomas Bayrle's next exhibition in the galleries' third decade working with him. The exhibition is the first to examine the rarely seen, ground breaking, work in both film and video that Bayrle executed, along with related works, beginning in the late 1980s.

The earliest work on view is *Autobahn-Kopf* (1988/89), a ten minute 16mm film loop picturing an abstraction of the artist's head divided into eleven parts, each containing individual footage of cars on a highway. The work was created through Bayrle having himself filmed and then tracing the frames to make a template. Bayrle has said "I didn't want to make a comic. I wanted to make a real trace of a real piece of film." The film was realized by subsequently photographing the 450 collages made from nearly 5000 individually created images, a project that took the artist nearly two years to complete. The full series of these handmade stills will be exhibited as a monumental wallpaper. In the work we see Bayrle's career long interest in mass culture as it relates to the individual, with his head being literally filled with the frantic and consistent motion of the consumerist class of the late 20th century.

Three video works spanning the 1990s will be shown alongside rarely and never before exhibited related works. *Superstars* (1993), *(B)Alt* (1997) and *Dolly Animation* (1998) all continue Bayrle's career long interest in the formation of larger images from smaller, built up, ones. Ranging from current events, to himself and his family, the animations relate to a very early attempt at what we would now call three dimensional computer animation.

Superstars presents itself as a loop of 9 portraits, each being comprised of small videos and sounds taken from media consumed through the television screen: the news, pornography, Hollywood movies. As the videos move from portraiture to revealing their audible content the viewer is left to balance and consolidate the anonymous connections between the smaller pieces that comprise the greater whole.

(B)Alt continues this animation advent in Bayrle's work by exploring the universal themes of aging, growth and the daily in deeply personal terms. In four looped sections the film acts as a double portrait of the artist and his newborn grandchild. In each Bayrle executes daily tasks (eating cereal, shaving, sleeping, brushing his teeth) and these images either compose an image of the child, or are composed of

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images of this child. This tension between who creates who, in terms of genealogy and becoming, cuts at a basic core of Bayrle's work where the artist considers his place in terms of the greater whole: of family and humanity.

Dolly Animation condenses these processes into an exploration of a specific and culture-shifting event of the late 20th century, the first successful cloning. The work with both humor and seriousness compares the images of a catholic priest with those of the famous cloned sheep, questioning religion's place in a world being dramatically shifted by science.

Vintage Iris prints on paper and stretched plastic, conceived as companion works to the films accompany the exhibition. In their static form they slow down the process of viewing these images as a type of visual exploration.

In all of the works we see the elements that have made Bayrle one of the most enduring artists of the European postwar moment: a rejection of the usual ways of executing tasks, an anticipatory use of technology and a vibrant compositional energy that unites the whole and entices us to look deeper. What we find within are the basic and tough questions of life in the modern era, regarding: science, aging, culture, global politics and art.

Thomas Bayrle (b. 1937, Berlin, DE) has exhibited widely internationally. Recent institutional solo exhibitions include at the New Museum, New York (2018), MAK, Vienna (2017) and Institute for Contemporary Art, Miami (2016). He has been included in wide ranging group exhibitions including documenta, Kassel (1964, 1977, 2005, 2012) and the Venice Biennale (2003, 2009).