

## PRESS TEXT

### **Dead We Act In Molecules - Katharina Fengler**

The speed of Michael Jackson's famous 'moonwalk' is equivalent to capturing with an extremely slow-motion video camera (500 frames per second) the mating dance of the male red-capped manakin in Central America. The bird's movements are too fast to be detected by the human eye. But this at any time has a fixed position in the universe, no matter what speed it goes. That is when our visual cortex has almost the same capacity as the slow-motion camera. But the human eye can only recognize speeds up to 60+ fps, thus this movement which our eyes cannot perceive, not fast enough for the information to reach the brain through the optic nerve is called 'motion blur'.

Let's imagine that we didn't have the ability to produce 'motion blur', we would not see the bird's flight but instead we would see the bird popping in and out of existence at high speeds in a three-dimensional space. Katharina Fengler's latest work, *Dead We Act In Molecules*, takes on the above relation with a projection of digital photographs she has taken over the past years. This projection will take place at Metropol 1, a movie theatre belonging to the Kitag Kino chain known to accommodate such blockbuster movies as 'The Fast and The Furious' (2001), Spiderman 3 (2007), 'The Dark Knight' (2008) etc., products of contemporary American culture which Jean Baudrillard twined as 'kinetic' and 'cinematic' to describe the appearance of the world about us being fast and visible.

Contrary to such blockbuster mindset, Fengler confronts us with a piefige\* (old-fashioned) slideshow.

By placing her images in anarchic succession, posing at 10 seconds per frame as opposed to 24 frames per second the normal speed of cinema, Fengler brings back the excitement of anticipation. The luminance created through the beamed light onto the reflective movie screen brings the image to life, activating our visual senses and impelling the audience to contemplate the image. Moreover, the synchronised soundtracks play a vital role in the perception, the familiarity evoking feelings congruent to the visual experience even at times when one feels the image is random or out of place. Fengler creates a novelty out of what is familiar by describing the familiar object in a refreshing manner, and leaving the objects nameless.

Thus, Fengler inadvertently shares the approach of Douglas Adams. "... Adams is a mock science fiction writer, because instead of following the usual conventions of the science fiction genre, Adams chooses to "reverse the paradigmatic expectations of the readers ... (and he is) consciously reversing the conventions of the genre." And her snapshot of a dolphin's performance taken on a day-trip to Connyland reminds us that, "Dolphins may well be carrying information as well as functions critical to the regeneration of life upon our planet". - Buckminster Fuller. It was the dolphins in Adam's 'Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' that actually replaced Earth with life in their 'Save the Humans' campaign after it was destroyed.

So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish.

Katharina Fengler \*1980 born in Bad Oeynhausen and grew up in Bad Salzuflen, Germany, now living in Zürich, Switzerland.

\*piefig: "Sort of strange contextual info, but at any rate \*piefig\* refers to a concept like \*petty-bourgeois/small-town/hick/old-fashioned\* etc." - leo.org commentary

***Dead We Act In Molecules* will be presented at Kino Metropol 1, Stauffacher, Zürich on 22 October 2008 at 8.30pm.**