

MATERIALIZATIONS

a conversation between Sabiha Keyif and Delia Jürgens



Cloud Storage | Materialization 2016 | Speisesaal Brunswick (GER) <-> Kyoto (JPN) | Photo: Nora Lammers

By looking at your work one can make out different layers of materials as well as elements that you are reusing in different materializations. How would you describe the structure of your work and how do you organize it? Would you describe it as a sort of an archive you are working with or is it more a floating ongoing process? How do digital and materialized pieces relate to each other?

It's a very visual out of the moment process. It might follow the back and forth practice you are used to in digital working procedures. In comparison to painting there is always a back and forth instead of the one and only ultimately set painting gesture. Immediately it inhabits and focuses on the momentary in my work. What I would relate to the digital impact on my artificial process. Everything is fluid. It can come out very differently. Just for a set moment, a situation, a time frame, it is how it looks and can't be changed in between that relational fact. Maybe it's indirectly structured as a kind of framework for itself.

My works have a kind of informational core, a kind of tissues with a functional structure. Dimensions like size, image carrier as well as the mobility of my work are centered. It can be materialized in many different ways and change its appearance but its core information stays even weather that information is elastic and can be stretched to relational facts too. Physically according to physical space as well as dynamically or meaningful through a specific focus I want the work expanding or being reduced for. Like if I want to point out a contentual fact of the work through focusing on a given element of the environment, an element of the work can become a server, being deformed or stretched to serve that specific fact in relation to a bigger topic like an exhibition with other artworks or architecture or nature surroundings and is more present through its absence or reduction as one example. It is finally but not necessarily materialized in the set situation or moment in relation to the given or created circumstances, scaled matterley. By materializing the works, the bodily reaction between the works, its surroundings and the viewer approaches to the center and ends in a very specific link of the different elements and layers in the show. Following one main set statement with an openness of the viewers linking process. The work can stay fluctuating and alive on a subtle level.

By mentioning an archive you might think about the work **Who fake am I now - Art School's Decor (ASD): Actual Contents to all the Citizens of HBK and other Art Schools** from 2012. It is a kind of archive, an ongoing collection of global products I'm collecting since 5 years now, following the idea of a storage in the sense of an Atlas or a baroque cabinet of wonder. I like the idea about decoration in the sense of trying to represent a kind of hidden information through its decoration, trying to represent truth that is twirled between different states, like social commitments as well as traditions or myths and illusions about life. Also in the way of being able to materialize something that is non materializable - that is fragile, like a ghost.

ASD was set as a humorous provocative statement of art school, art market, how art is being materialized to evoke a currency, the question of value, where value can be found or value of a piece and assessment in general. It's a neutral portrait of moments that can be found in the decay of the products we are surrounded by as well as its impact how people live nowadays, what kind of illusions, imaginations and wishes they have about life - represented through the image of those plastic fossils (99-cent-dreams) in the sense of a souvenir. The piece is set in different physical links: products of the collection that are presenting an informational stream or line of thoughts often displayed in an easily found way of a board or a shelf, a glass vitrine or a multi media wall construction in example as television boards called 'Wohnwand' [Living Wall] - high definition glossy materials, cheaply (easily) produced, lighted to shine.

The physical links are accompanied by a digital catalog showing over 600 global products and surrogates you can buy in every imaginable version or materialization; in different sizes, different dimensions, as physical objects, their photographed and printed image (tattoo/idol) or the immaterial raster graphic of that image, each with their own value and advantage, signed or framed, ect. with the feature of buying the permission to link the set thought line monitored by the artist as an add.

Those physical links, like **Folding Screen [Display #9. Triptych]** in **Delia Jürgens. Untrodden Areas - Chrome** at Künstlerhaus Meinersen or **Die Geschichte der Entstehung der Welt - Selbstportrait [The history of the genesis of the world] - Selfportrait** at Kunstverein Hannover, are presented through a chosen line of the collected products that can be monitored differently. Dealing with the question of repetition and change in an infinite spiral, they are displayed in relation to the situation. They can be re-arranged or as you say 'reused' with the back thought about the impact of digital life where nothing will ever be thrown into trash. Trash once was leftovers or a by-product of the production. Now as it has been transferred into



1 PRDCT Catalog - LNK. 13.6.131.120.0.132/133.1
 Courtesy: Delia Jürgens

2 Die Geschichte der Entstehung der Welt - Selbstportrait [The history of the genesis of the world - selfportrait] | Materialization 2012/13 | Kunstverein Hannover (GER) | photo: Raimund Zakowski | Courtesy: Delia Jürgens

the design of our computers, you are given the opportunity to recover the trashed data. A once made decision can easily be remade or even revoked, including the acceptance about change. Everything is just for a specific moment. Data is permanently monitored by sensors installed in all of our smart life devices, collecting facts to create the best ecological footprint archiving our statistic future. The future thus becomes the power of influencing and forming our presence, our contemporary identity that in turn influences and forms our future. Our footprints, our left overs, our contemporary identity and values thus manifest the future while the future manipulates, writes and manifests the footprint and left overs through stereotyped statistics itself. Contemporary life is already programmed through filters of efficiency. A uniform pre-coded life where thinking in the meaning of reflection dies and coexists in uniform filtered dead ends only. I think this is very interesting due to global atmosphere or global warming circumstances, due to our lives. While human life seems to die through robotic data files, those robotic data collections seem to maintain the biosphere to make human life possible. In this sense filters are becoming very interesting. We already have factional filters that maintain our fossil resources. What we need besides that are personal filters that might follow emotions and senses instead, that maintain our sensitivity of seeing and becoming aware, that evoke a provocative and irritating reaction to create the resistance of thinking, a reflection that thus gives birth to changes about social commitments and limited horizons like race, gender, tradition and origin, that avoid that we become victims of an empowered elite that controls the censorship of the common filters programming rationality instead of emphasis.

What part do the titles play in your works? Do they have a specific function or role for you? A kind of layer they are adding?

The titles in general are a very centered main fact in my work. The whole materialization and its contents shift and reshape through them. It's the main statement of each work in interaction with the materials. Quite often they function as a hint for the different frames or as you called it, layers, and are opening the discussion about the layered materials, their references, their notable information and their shifting focus as well as their meaning.

Like the three works in **Bawarih Rift - Part I (Viscous Pixels)** at Kunstverein Langenhagen: **Chakra I (Double Helix - Whatever I try, pink turns out)**, **Chakra II (Double Helix - I'm a Filter)** and **Chakra III (Double Helix - You can close me)**. Chakra is the name of the sleeping bag, the sleeping bag is quilted by two double helixes each, each work is personalized with a statement of mine, the whole statement-line interfering with the set global mass products and materials of each as well as the



1 Chakra III (Double Helix - You can close me) (Detail) | Materialization 2015 | Kunstverein Langenhagen (GER) | photo: Samuel Henne | Courtesy: Delia Jürgens

2 Desert [Display #5. Kimono] | Materialization 2015 | Künstlerhaus Meinersen (GER) | photo: Delia Jürgens | Courtesy: Delia Jürgens

three works among themselves interfering and opening a dialog through the statements, the titles.

The titles also edge the frame of each work/exhibition part. The exhibition at Künstlerhaus Meinersen for instance is called **Untrodden Areas**. That's the main frame, the whole show, which is then splitted into four main parts: **Cloud Storage** (Lower gallery), **The Vertical is about the Desire to move - to escape** (Lobby), **We live at the Bottom of an Ocean of Air** (Studio) and **Chrome** (Upper Gallery). These four main situations are splitted into single works with their titles, too, as well as the single works are by layers of processed materials and pure materials with their barcodes. Probably you can label it as a kind of zooming process. Near and far appeals of the works change in their materialized surfaces. Like seduction of something far can be dissolved into something dry by zooming in or that a (close) material evokes the wish of touching to make out or to proof the material it pretends to be. Appearances are pretenses, so what's for real?

Every moment becomes quickly powdery, truth and origin can be find in a blur, a constant shift when one moment fades into the other fluidly.

The different layers of materials seem to be familiar from everyday life situations, on the one hand things that we are surrounded by like different building materials, materials with a clear function, as well as objects of our globalized mass culture such as hair extensions, fake nails, phone cases, gum or instant food. On the other hand there are lots of references to images and structures from the digital world and links to stock imagery. I'd like to know more about the process of generating your imagery. How would you describe the materials and content you are working with? What different layers of symbols or symbols are you using and how do you choose them? Why did you decide to use stock imagery and to integrate it into your work?

I like wandering through cities, physically or virtually, observing and absorbing things. Both give me a feeling of being flooded.

Randomly I bring some things home or to the studio, sometimes first home and later to the studio, sometimes the other way around... I store my thoughts in a mix of images I find online and notes I text in different noting programs as well as in sketch books.. combining and layering them, transforming their meaning, reference or symbol through the shape of the other. There is no difference between a virtual found material and one in daily life or even text. It's like symbols, kinda icons or labels with a specific meaning or symbol how it's understood or seen generally. Quite often I spot out something and see something different in them than to the most people I talk to do, so I'm using them in a different way. I focus on the main motif they are representing, flattening them spatially that they become surfaces - Horizontal and vertical flats of layered and transmitted information that suggest room in the sense of body. Body thus becomes absent material imagined through its flat shell of transformed information, being scaled by matter.

Jonny Coleman created a very nice metaphor when he blended an ocean into a freeway in his text to my work. Both are waving processes of stream dynamics. Both stand for such different things with the highest distance but in the way of their function they are similar. There is also a Zen quote that says:

'If we try to block a stream or resist it, it will simply go around without a pause, it will find its own way. This way is like a fallen leaf moving along a stream. If you allow the stream to carry you, its strength becomes yours.'

Maybe I would describe my working process like such a stream, in the same minute you accept this natural stream the association of mainstream, a regulated constructed system

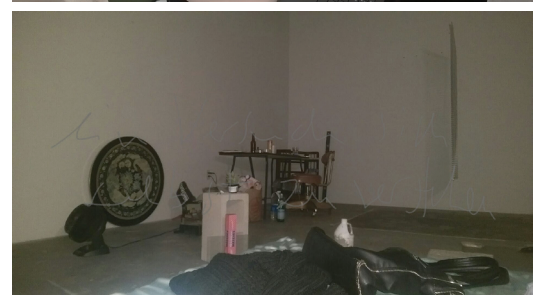
pops up in my mind, totally different but totally the same. So I combine or layer one on the other, visualizing both shapes, transforming them or leaving them the easy way and opening this dialog about the discrepancy through the title. Things are how they are. Even they aren't how they are, how they are described, how they are expected to be. Like water - water is expected to be blue. It is blue even its transparent too, or just reflecting if you wanna be concrete. I'm thinking about the origin of things, its influences what and who influence identity. How subtle and deep those influences occur.

I like that stock imagery feels pretty natural even it is the most fabricated image you can find probably. I like the discrepancy of being the most anonymous image while approaching the most personal and intimate emotions. It becomes naturally in that way through hyper fake or hyper realism. Many stock images are made to evoke a very specific feeling or bodily reaction. I try to uncover that by deconstructing the image by converting the references, their labels and the title through different connotations and give or set a rational portrait of stranded moments.

Which are the let's say "categories", in which you are organizing your works? How would you describe or differentiate them? What happens through the layering of the different materials?

There are objects of everyday life - building materials: to build a home, to decorate a home or to extend, feel or vitalize a body with a very clear and direct function - next to images from the web that are showing the same image information and are working in a way of a decal of these products or the feelings they evoke or are expected to evoke, next to visualized dream symbols and natural elements and spheres such as water, desert, stones or their artificial decals as crystallized PE ice pickles i.e..

Most of the objects are labeled by a barcode or by a watermark of the stock image agency showing their origin. Some are already layered online so you have a stock image of a case using a stock image of a mineral or a flower. By overlying the product's information their meaning or function gets blurry - one product fades into the other: A case becomes a carrier of a flower, the flower becomes the surface of a case - A surface can be a skin. By that informational statement the flower already became a case, the whole object a display stating a flower as a case. Products and things in general are blurred into each



1 A Morning full of Dust you're half inside - and half Way out [Sketches from L.A.] | Materialization 2016 | studio Chinatown - Los Angeles (USA) | Photo and Courtesy the artist.

2 Delia Jürgens in her studio in Chinatown - Los Angeles (USA) 2016 | Photo and Courtesy the artist.

3 Ein Versuch sich selbst zu verstehen [An attempt to understand oneself] | studio Chinatown - Los Angeles (USA) 2016 | Photo and Courtesy the artist.

4 Jürgens' studio Chinatown - Los Angeles (USA) 2016 | Photo and Courtesy the artist.

other, they are losing their function and become senseless in a way even they are filled with sense. Being only the decal or tattoo or fossil and function as a kind of application, a constructive ornament, of the original, they become a souvenir or a reminder of the single parts in one body. Decoration with deepness. The work **Desert [Display #5. Kimono]** works like that, a deconstructed stock image of a desert printed on satin between aluminum clip rails over a bamboo bar - a desert becomes satin, the functional aspect to be stuck between clip rails or aluminum becomes a kimono as well as the whole display of that materialization (process) is put on the level of a kimono with a barcode linked to the bamboo stab. A dry sand particle interwoven in ripples as waves stuck between clips, pulled over a bamboo bar as a kimono tradition. Aspects of information that crystallize for a moment to dissolve in the next.

I'm interested in things that are surfaces or covers, that pretend to be something else than they are or things that do something with the human surface, the skin - like masking it, recover it, decorate it or just hide it. It's about the question of a hidden information that exists and that is way deeper than it seems to be.

Marcus's alphabet is like a collection of snapshots of different associations and moments in relation to your work, it also refers to an openness which seems to be important and implicit for your works...

I guess thoughts about momentary in a sense of truth can be found in all of my works. One example I worked on recently is **Filters**, a haiku series as a calendar I made during my recent artist in residence program on the countryside. I was fascinated by the changing horizons I haven't seen and wasn't able to observe that intensely in a while. Horizons seen as a kind of functional blurry immaterial layer embodying deepness and distance as well as perspective or the lack of perspective, also in a cognitive way on things. Landscape as a wandering process. So I wrote a haiku for every month of my stay and combined it with one of my phone photos of that month which I overlaid by standardized social media filters such as Instagram. A haiku is a humorous tercet about a moment, describing the actual situation and evoking emotion over the formal and rational openness of its text. Adding my personal photos overlaid by an Instagram filter, a social media platform people are using to show and share moments of their daily lives, maybe to collect them as memories too, ldk... I'm fascinated by the fact that many people are using those media to feel those moments more intensely through sharing it in public. Like becoming more real more adventurous over its isolated stigmata of a photo, cut in a fitting square and being alienated through filters. Or exactly the other way around, to aware the abstraction and ultra realness by mentioning #nofilter. Socializing isolated moments through commenting on each others posts wordly. Extending that moment timely through the post and the possibility of communicating it.

It's interesting that you are mentioning the aspect of social media platforms – platforms which function also as a digital network – for the catalog you chose not only to integrate texts, but also music tracks as part of the physical presentation of your work – How comes? Which role does the network play for you? How does it influence your work? Would you say that there are parallels between creating a new materialization in space and composing a song?

I invited 4gotten Morb to release some of his tracks in my catalog on which he worked at the same time I made my recent works. I liked his songs from the first minute on, seeing something relational to my works - layers that create a kind of sensual visuality. Generally, I prefer parallel texts, texts that are art pieces by themselves as a descriptive text never can hit truth like an artistic language could, visually or with sound or even text. So I was wondering about the kind of framework of other artists I could add in the catalog to avoid a direct

text about my work but to open and still show the different levels of my work.

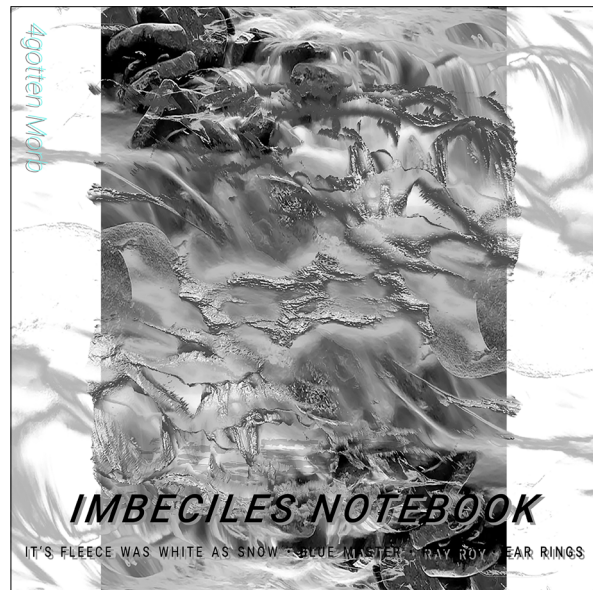
I immediately was thinking about 4gotten Morb's tracks, that are spherical and evoke a clear but also blurred emotion in different layers of ambiguous meanings, and Marcus' texts, whose formal language I like. A very precise pointed state that becomes emotional over an invisible layer. I guess I like subtle things. Maybe that's why I liked the idea of using a catalog as a networking structure by itself and invited people to get in contact kinda under cover. I invited Jack'le Lo and Jean-Luc Unger to work together with 4gotten Morb. Finally the collaboration didn't work out and 4Gotten Morb decided to write a soundtrack to my recent body of work: ***Imbeciles Notebook*** to ***Untrodden Areas***. But what

stays is the idea to break a proper function, to play around with general expectations and provoke an irritation or a friction. I think friction or a break is the only way to rethink and to reflect that general commodities can be renewed.

Quite often I'm thinking about what the easiest and most direct way to communicate would be. I'm thinking about a singer who's just using her own voice being able to create a very strong connection and giving a very direct perspective on life, without any load - a very momentary and easy way to state things without a material add. I like the idea of a pop song in this context - a song that is heard by people all over the world with different cultural backgrounds, different nationality, different gender, all listening to the same song singing the same lyrics... something uniting in the mainstream of pop music. I prefer music to art in this context, that it feels way more direct than fine arts, direct in the way of no load or material... though I like the absence of a body in fine arts.. A leftover, a left materialized trace or remain representing a thought in the absence of a person, evoking something through its absence, through nothingness while being pure material - hyper presence. The contradiction it is making up on the one side but also the openness through absence of a one and only person who's Individuum dominates and thus manipulates and rules the whole situation on the other side. I guess that hits my idea what life might be. Like a kind of statistic that a statement of 100 people come closer to truth than a one and only person can come even one person can give a clearer and more focused view on the 100 persons' statement to become truthful.

Since the very beginning my works function as a kind of stage. Vertical and horizontal flats that display relicts of body. I invite or integrate music exactly because of the idea pop music or music in general evokes or has. The staged fragments, displays of surfaces with shaped or hidden cores, function as a backdrop, displaying the remains of a body while presenting its cultural or daily life relicts in flat screens... something that isn't there, that is set in vertical and horizontal panels affecting space matterley, being filled with a spherical unifying moment.

My idea about the collaboration was that about a pop song, an exhibition of my art and a release party of 4gotten Morb's EP, just that the exhibition platform was a catalog and the



4 Gotten Morb | **Imbeciles Notebook** | 2015 | Soundtrack
<https://soundcloud.com/4gottenmorb/imbeciles-notebook>
cover: Delia Jürgens

party a moment in solitude where you can listen to the soundtrack online while being bodily absent. In the idea of independency and independent communities to censor own censorships, to question and criticize general commitments. I just founded the work **DIS-PLAY**.

DIS-PLAY is an external monitor, which can be shown in different versions: on the facade of a (shopping) store/mall in the city center as an oversized billboard with a goddess Sphinx character divinely 'above' the city; As a stand-alone display on the level of the passers-by, which directly eye-to-eye meet a mirror / portrait in oversize; or as a surface in a department store/mall window. Usually used for advertising purposes, it presents a permanent digital presence, a steady stream, interlaced with a hybrid studio, which shows live images in the everyday urban upheaval as well as in nightly solitude possibly from the opposite part of the world and its actual time. As an encounter beyond the temporal and geographical boundaries it continues my ideas from the work *urinvited.net* what I initiated in 2012.

Display is the negation of the automated play: dis (= not) - play (=enact) and refers to the Nordic mythology. Quite different from what was initially expected, DIS-PLAY is nothing on which something is represented or imaged, but the negation of this automated playback. It is even the activity or the being of a *Disen-Wesen*, an unspecified, surreal female being. The feed is not separable from the display, both do not work without the other. Thus the title already indicates the ambiguity, which is in everything. A constant stream, a news feed, a digital formative installation in the character of my media-comprehensive work is showing digital work interacting with live streamed physical work: collages, photos, texts and video clips as a cohesion of still images, running feed and intermixed images, links to social media platforms as well as slideshows. Thematically changing chapters present the studio-life, the studio-production and -inspiration in their post-stage as well as in their traditional manner show. Digital works in exchange with the reproduction of physical works, exhibition situations as well as clips of quoted texts from thematically relevant on the Internet available talks are compiled and played in a digital conglomerate. A constantly evolving crystallization, which represents a mirror image, a reflection panel, as opposed to the consorquious movements in the human current of the inner city, and offers a moment of pause and reflection, the moment of the studio, while creating a life image.

DIS-PLAY is a format that leaves the art product in its actual hybrid form, in which inspiration, artistic work, life and materialized form of artistic thought interweave. It is the interactive, artistic discourse and process rather than its image, its representation, or even its archiving. In addition to the main component, the virtual showroom, DIS-PLAY is also pursuing further exhibition formats with the aim of a political contemporary statement and its distribution as a publication page in the form of a publisher:

Life is for sharing.

The interview was published on the occasion of the exhibition catalog: **Delia Jürgens. Untrodden Areas**

UNTRODDEN AREAS

2016

English

200 pages

14,8 x 21cm

4-color DPP, thread stitching

ISBN: 978-3-00-055715-6

\$ 22

available at [DIS-PLAY Publishing](#)

Delia Jürgens (*1986) lives and works in Los Angeles, Berlin and Hannover.

Sabiha Keyif (*1985) studied aesthetics and art history and is currently working as curator at ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe.