

DIALOGUE WITH IMAGINARY VIEWERS

Nin Brudermann – Stefan Brüggemann – Marcel Duchamp – Jérôme Hentsch – Cildo Meireles – Céline Peruzzo

KMD — Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp | The Forestay Museum of Art, Cully, Switzerland

August 29 till September 21, 2016 · Open 24/24 from Mondays to Sundays · livia@akmd.ch · www.akmd.ch



Simulation of the exhibition in the lower exhibition room



Simulation of the exhibition in the upper exhibition room

With *Dialogue with Imaginary Viewers* the KMD will be organizing, for the very first time, a late summer exhibition scheduled for the period from August 29 to September 21, 2016. On display will be selected works that have over the years found their way into the collection of the KMD as gifts from artists. All of these works have as their theme the ironic game with values.

The *Zero Dollar Bills* (1978–1984) of Cildo Meireles (born in Rio de Janeiro in 1948) have absolutely no value in our everyday capitalist world. Although they exist, they are nothing. But in a world of thoughts, ideas and fantasies they are decidedly precious, not least because they provoke an endless discourse on the fundamental value of things and of life itself. Similarly rich in metaphors is Marcel Duchamp's pharmacist's vial from the *Boîte-en-valise* (1934–1941), which originally, in 1919, took the form of a larger vial as a gift for Louise and Walter Arensberg and contained 50 ccs of *Air de Paris*. Duchamp's vial will be brought face to face, so to speak, with Meireles's Zero Dollar Bills in the lower exhibition room of the KMD. The content of the vial is invisible. We simply have to imagine it, but then we can never be quite sure that this tiny object does in fact contain Parisian air. In fact we cannot be sure at all. But if we tried to verify the contents, we would have to break open the vial (the sculptural, real, visually visible protective shell around the invisible) and the air inside it would escape and be lost for ever. Thus the supposedly valuable is inaccessible and its significance (air as a precondition of life and air from Paris as an elixir of love) evolves only thanks to the power of our imagination.

A similar questioning of value is the *100 Dollar Labyrinth* by Nin Brudermann (born in Vienna in 1970) in the upper exhibition room. The artist herself wrote in an email dated July 11, 2016: "A tiny ball rolls through the labyrinth [of the] legendary, perfectly counterfeited \$100 bill, which, as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung recently reported, is printed by the CIA itself: currency manipulation, monetary warfare, money laundering—that's what this work is about, or, to put it more simply, it's just [about] a game of gold in Switzerland." Next to it, and operating in much the same sense, the *Little Gold Hand* of Céline Peruzzo (born in Geneva in 1980) holds a miniature parasol between its index and middle finger, or, to express it in less diminutive terms: a gigantic golden hand serves as the base of a golden sunshade that inevitably casts a shadow wherever it is opened. The third object of the ensemble, hanging from the ceiling, is a *Gold-Plated Key Fob* by Jérôme Hentsch (born in 1963, also in Geneva). The object is a shiny miniature replica of the brittle gravestone of John Calvin, which was not erected in Geneva until two hundred years after his death because—according to the legend—the reformer did not wish any visible signs to be erected in his honor. With his decision to take the gravestone of the famous revolutionary theologian and make from it a tourist gadget that both awakens the impression of being extremely valuable and bunches together the keys to one's own four walls, one's own car, one's own safe and/or workplace, Hentsch has initiated an intellectual game that plays not only with the value of honor but also, and on a general level, with the meaning of ownership (works of art) and religion (spiritual values).

The title *Dialogue with Imaginary Viewers* is a work by Stefan Brüggemann (born in Mexico-City in 1975). It has been taken from a list of his exhibition titles that are freely available on his website. In deciding that the title of an exhibition may also be a work of art, the artist questions the value and meaning of words that describe, define and/or metaphorize art. Moreover, with his *Dialogue with Imaginary Viewers*—Number 296 of his collection—he also makes direct reference to Marcel Duchamp's legendary lecture *The Creative Act* of 1957, in which the great nominalist explains, casually but precisely, that a work of art can reach completion only through the dialogue with the viewer, that is to say, with you, kind visitor.