

# hoast

artist run space

große sperlgasse 25  
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Janine Schranz & Daniela Zeilinger: Passepartout

Opening Day: May 7 2021, 2—7 pm

On view: May 8—23 2021

Opening hours: Fr 3—6 pm, Sa 12—4 pm and by appointment

Cropping and framing – the selection of visual information by means of a framed cutout – are among the most important tools of photography and film. In the works of Janine Schranz and Daniela Zeilinger, these techniques of framing, so inherent to the dispositifs of film and photography, are transposed to different media, turned onto and against themselves, inverted and deconstructed. As an emblem for the multifaceted framing effects they develop in their joint exhibition at hoast<sup>1</sup>, the two artists have chosen a concept closely linked to the history of presentation of (photographic) images: the passe-partout.

The sentences that can be read in Janine Schranz's *And it is there, half-way through the interior, that the woman appears in the screen*, 2021, are taken from a text by architectural theorist Beatriz Colomina on the politics of the gaze in Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier.<sup>2</sup> The passage Schranz selected is about the film *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1929, directed by Pierre Chenal with Le Corbusier). In it, Colomina describes how the camera follows a woman moving through Le Corbusier's *Villa Savoye*. Her body is always seen fragmented, from behind – framed not only by the frame of the camera, but also by the architecture of the house itself. Her line of vision is turned toward the interior of the house, while the gaze of the male subject dominates her, in a similar fashion to the way the cinematic-photographic gaze of the modern architect controls and domesticates the surrounding landscape through the horizontal windows of his house.

Schranz does not simply extract a continuous passage from the textual fabric. She cuts out individual parts, isolates them from one another, and photographs them individually on specially coated glass plates. By framing the works, an additional boundary is drawn in, which has an effect both outwardly and inwardly. Toward the outside, the frames emphasize their object character as exhibits and display elements in the exhibition space. The viewers move between these objects, experiencing the space of the exhibition in the time of viewing, from „frame“ to „frame“ – in a kind of inverted quotation of the cinematic event that the text describes. Inwardly, however, the frames also emphasize the quality of the works as photographic images that not only give something to read, but open up a virtual space of contemplation of their own, in which the ambiguous, ghostly materiality of this writing emerges. Here, the gray veil of the exposed photo emulsion oscillates between foreground and background, between the motif and the framing of the texts. A frame within a frame: Passepartout.

Daniela Zeilinger's works regularly play with a kind of abstraction reminiscent of the experimental photography of the historical avant-gardes. Unlike Dadaist photomontage, for instance, however, the aim is not to create a new syntax through the distribution (or spacing) of elements that – being recognizable in themselves – wrest an underlying truth from the appearances of reality.<sup>3</sup> Rather, a sense of disorientation arises in the viewer, in the face of the difficulty (if not impossibility) to grasp the spatial, material and mediatic conditions of Zeilinger's compositions. Although everything seems to be visible, not everything is shown. The motifs of the pictures, as well as the means and processes employed, remain enigmatic, eluding access and classification.

In *Violet*, 2021, a ghostly light spot occupies the center of the picture. Like a mask, it conceals the identity of the forms peeking out from behind it. Instead of delimiting the pictorial space from its outer boundary, which is usually associated with a focusing of attention and a clarification of spatial relations, here a barrier grows out of the center of the pictorial field. Passepartout, inverted.

This mask, however, does not simply serve to hide depth in order to celebrate the abstraction of the surface. Rather, one takes from it an invitation to speculation, to a game of seduction that stirs up a desire but never quite allows conquest by the *logos*. The image remains enigmatic, eludes the notion. The inversion of colors, evident in the peculiarly luminous tones and the X-ray-like light figure of the center, intensifies the visual ambiguity. There is something virtual about what is shown, both as a whole and in its individual parts; it is reminiscent of the intangible spatiality of digitally generated images. Yet remnants of the real peek out, shine through, confront the viewing subject. Their eerie presence is challenging, gripping, haunting.

Just as Janine Schranz and Daniela Zeilinger each take up and process different phenomena of framing in their joint exhibition under the emblem of the *passe-partout*, one can also recognize different modes of critical-emancipatory visual production in their works. For Jacques Rancière, emancipation means „the dismantling of the old distribution of what could be seen, thought and done.“<sup>4</sup> Crucial to the continuation of the critical project, he argues, is „an organization of the sensible where there is neither a reality concealed behind appearances nor a single regime of presentation and interpretation of the given imposing its obviousness on all.“<sup>5</sup> By translating, shifting, and inverting the conventional logic of framing, Schranz's and Zeilinger's works make visible its definitional power. At the same time, they strip our habitual arrangements of perception and meaning of their supposed security and, in the zones between the phenomena and their framings, open our eyes to new topographies of the possible.

Michael Wonnerth-Magnusson

<sup>1</sup> The exhibition had initially been planned to be a part of the festival Foto Wien 2021, which was postponed to March 2022 due to the pandemic-related circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> Beatriz Colomina. 1992. "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," in Beatriz Colomina (ed.). *Sexuality and Space*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 73–128.

<sup>3</sup> C. f. Rosalind Krauss. 1981. "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *October*, Vol. 19 (Winter 1981). 21–23.

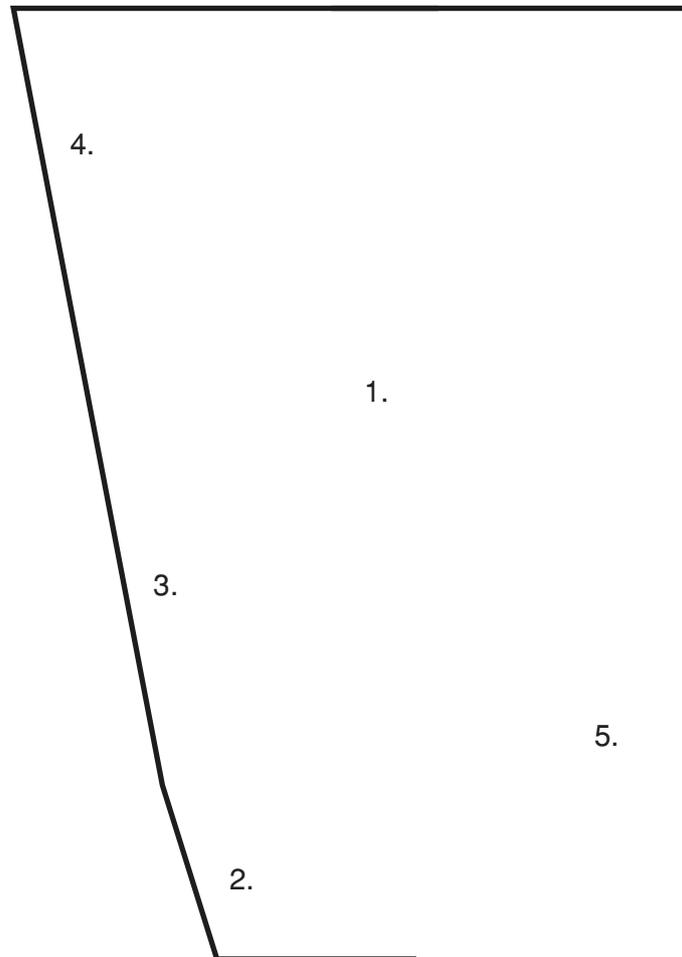
<sup>4</sup> Jacques Rancière. 2009. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. London/New York: Verso. 47.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 48–49.

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1. Daylight

2. / 4. / 5. Janine Schranz

And it is there, halfway through the interior, that the woman appears in the screen,  
2021

Photoemulsion coated on glass, framed, 28,5 × 19 cm, Ed. 1 + 1 AP

3. Daniela Zeilinger

Violet, 2021

Analogue C-Print from slide, 190 × 150 cm, Ed. 1 + 1 AP