



FONDAZIONE  
PASTIFICIO CERERE

presents

**Nina Könnemann**

Curated by Michele D'Aurizio

**Postcard from... Nina Könnemann**

**From 26 May to 13 July 2012**

**Opening: 25 May 2012, 12 am**

**At the Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Rome**

From 25 May to 13 July the **first solo exhibition** in Italy by the German artist **Nina Könnemann** will be open to the public at the Fondazione Pastificio Cerere. Four video works will be on show that retrace her artistic output from the beginning of the last decade to the present day.

Könnemann explores moments of social interaction, focusing her gaze on each occasion on the micro-phenomena that take place on the margins of such events. The artist's use of the hand-held camera allows her to react spontaneously to the movements of the crowd and present a first-hand account of the goings-on that she observes, revealing minimal, trivial and irrelevant acts that alter the conventional narrations of such happenings. The artist captures moments in which reality is laid bare, providing a glimpse of the subversive potential that sub- and countercultural events have always sought and that the media instead constantly manipulate and turn into spectacle. In this sense, Könnemann's use of the video undermines its mass-media function: reality is documented with the intention of bearing witness to the self-generation of parallel realities.

In **M.U.D.** (2000) for example, on show in the third room, young people wander around a natural setting littered with trash and cloaked in the smoke of dying fires, the aftermath of an event whose nature it is impossible to deduce. The title of the work is an acronym of 'multi-user dungeon', a now dated type of online role-playing game involving multiple players who interact with the fantasy world and other participants by typing simple commands on the keyboard. The scenario of **M.U.D.** can in fact be interpreted as a stage where no one is 'acting' but all are part of a dispersed 'performance'.

The artist seems to be suggesting that the moments when people gather do not represent occasions on which it is possible to step outside, even temporarily, the roles laid down for them by society, because the logic that defines them proposes social structures that are equally paralysing. The individual who, taking part in a political demonstration or a rave, intends to obliterate the private in the public, is in fact the victim of other forms of dominance: the processes of commodification of cultural symbols, the mechanisms for neutralization of diversity, the aesthetic drifts of the act of protest, etc. Könnemann's research, however, reveals how these contexts can still be settings for the assertion of individual freedom, to be understood not as a desire for escape, but as a moment for the formation of identity without conditioning.

Escape is the theme of **Bann** (2011), also on show in the third room. In the video a number of people are filmed during the so-called 'cigarette break' in office hours. The setting is the City of London, the world's financial hub. In **Bann** the immaterial nature of the work that is the trademark of this context is contrasted with a work ethic that interprets free time as 'freed' time, an undeniable right of the worker: the break allows frustrations to be vented, instinctual modes of behaviour to (re-)emerge, the individual to temporarily abandon his or her role. Hidden away in the *junkspaces* of the headquarters of neo-capitalist corporations, sometimes reflected in the gigantic sheets of glass that form the skin of those buildings, Könnemann's smokers, like her wandering youths, are suspended between make-believe and reality, between 'pose' and instinct.

Through her artistic practice, Könnemann seeks to bring out something real and sincere from the mix of idealism, cynicism and gratuitous spectacle that characterises the contemporary world. But as in **Talon** and **Typhoon**, the two video-animations that open the exhibition, where the camera movement simulates a roller coaster ride against the backdrop of a collage of posters for films with fantastic or post-apocalyptic settings, the subjective experience is more 'real' if it is extreme, tragic, ecstatic—as if to say that the logic of the spectacle is inherent in human nature.

Finally, the exhibition presents Könnemann's proposal for **Postcard from...**, the project devised by the art director of the Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Marcello Smarrelli, and realized in collaboration with A.P.A. (Agenzia Pubblicità Affissioni), in which Italian and foreign artists are invited to design a poster measuring 400 x 300 cm, to be put up in the courtyard of the Pastificio Cerere and at various locations in the city. The image created by Könnemann – a detail of a poster for a fantasy film onto which cigarettes 'rain' – falls foul of the Italian law that forbids the advertising of tobacco products, even if only indirectly, and so cannot be put up in a public place. However, the proposal is a significant element in the process of construction of Könnemann's exhibition and bears witness to the artist's desire to tackle all the formats promoted by the institution. Far from any intention to comment on the contradictions inherent in commissions of public art, its inclusion in the exhibition shows how, at times, certain projects are doomed to fail.

Könnemann's exhibition is the first of two events that will be staged in 2012 by **Michele D'Aurizio**, the new protagonist of the **Curator in residence** project promoted by the Fondazione Pastificio Cerere in Rome and its art director, Marcello Smarrelli. This project, which entails the appointment of a young guest curator who is given the task of proposing a cultural programme for the duration of a year, bears witness, among the various activities envisaged, to the propensity for education and cultural development that has always characterised the Roman foundation. D'Aurizio will also curate the solo exhibitions at the MACRO (Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma) by the two winners of the third 6ARTISTA competition, Francesco Fonassi and Margherita Moscardini.

**Nina Könnemann** (Bonn, 1971; she lives in Berlin) has taken part in numerous solo and joint exhibitions. Among the latter we can single out the ones at the Haus der Kunst, Munich; nbk, Berlin; Nürnberger Kunstverein; Künstlerhaus Stuttgart; Camden Art Centre, London; CCA Wattis, San Francisco. Among the solo exhibitions, the ones at Portikus, Frankfurt; Galerie Karin Günther, Hamburg; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz; CCA Glasgow; Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne; Cubitt, London.

**Michele D'Aurizio** (Chieti, 1985; he lives in Milan) is associate editor of the quarterly magazine of contemporary art and culture *Kaleidoscope* and founder of the non-profit exhibition space Gasconade in Milan.

### Technical details of the exhibition

Artist: Nina Könnemann

Curator: Michele D'Aurizio

Opening: 25 May 2012, 12 am

Duration: 26 May - 13 July 2012

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 3 pm to 7 pm

Entrance: free

Venue: Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Via degli Ausoni 7, Rome

How to get there: MM Termini (Linea A), MM Tiburtina (Linea B), bus Linea 71

Information: Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, tel. 06 45422960, [info@pastificiocerere.it](mailto:info@pastificiocerere.it),  
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