

Monika Lahrkamp **Unchained**

The work of Ria Patricia Röder marks an intensive examination of the possibilities and conditions of photography and video art.

The artist, who studied among others with Ulay, Katharina Sieverding and Elger Esser, attempts to capture a clear line with her camera. Such was the case in her work *Unchained* in 2004, which was exhibited in the Black Box of the exhibition VIDEO KOOP. The one-minute video documents a 2004 performance from the exhibition opening of "13 AXS" at Haus am Lützowplatz in Berlin.

The viewer looks through a wide corridor, at the end of which spectators have gathered, separated by an opening in the next room. On the left and right walls hang picture frames and the edge of a flat panel is also visible. Quite unexpectedly, and as if from nowhere, the artist comes out of the right opening, swooping into the room on roller skates. She is clothed in a black dress made from pond liners, neon tights, and a neon top. She wears a neon-colored mask over her eyes, reminiscent of comic book characters like Batman, Zorro, and the Beagle Boys from Donald Duck. What comes next is both stunning and comical at the same time—instead of avoiding the pictures, she closes in and unleashes herself upon them, letting herself fall into them with great physicality. The glass panel, which is designed to protect the exhibition wall behind the frame, actually explodes from the impact and broken pieces of glass spread out across the floor with a loud and menacing sounding clang. The artist disappears through the doorway into the next room, then after a short pause, she comes back and destroys the second picture. This process is repeated four times and the end result is the bare framework of the splintered glass panels.

Next, the artist chooses to propel herself forward on her roller skates. This, on the one hand, creates a fluid circular motion and dynamic, as if she is running; on the other hand it also creates a sense of aggression, which, of course, is reinforced by the sounds the shoes make with the creaking and rippling of the wheels.

The performance was not previously rehearsed and only examined through theoretical tests. For example, she must destroy the last picture with the help of her elbow, which had been impossible with the mere force of the impact alone.

Unchained, in addition to her other works, demands the complete physical involvement from the artist. At the same time the videos show a second, formal level, which deals with the fixation or the "analogous decay" of images. In the case of *Unchained* this decay is in addition to a parallel emergence of a new image creation process. The production setting, which in this case is the exhibition space and not the studio, is newly refracted and reflected.

Monika Lahrkamp (Julia Stoschek Collection) in

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