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***RAYDIATOR* – Mnemonic bridge to another reality**

Ria Patricia Röder was selected by a jury in 2011 to receive the artist-in-residence grant. Her four-month residency in Gera, the Otto Dix capital, began in September 2011. Her exhibition *RAYDIATOR* in the middle pavilion of the Gera Orangerie marks the end of the artist's residency and offers a glimpse into her current work.

The title of the exhibition may seem somewhat high-tech at first, and indeed, it evokes images of technical apparatuses or complex experiments with heat and unknown phenomena of energy, the control over which is characteristic for a modernized world that regards its continued existence and level of innovation as being forever dependent on the development of complex technologies. Art, however, takes different paths, and *RAYDIATOR* in fact refers to the artist's series of works of large-scale color photograms (some of which were made in Gera), shown in the exhibition.

The photo and video artist, who has Portuguese roots, was born in 1983 in Verden (Aller) in Lower Saxony. She studied visual and media arts in Karlsruhe, Berlin, and Vienna. In 2011, she began working with photograms, a special technique in photography in which no camera is used. This technique enjoys a long tradition in the history of photography, and this method has been explored in various ways in many eras – from the Victorian pioneer work in photography in the nineteenth century to the American and European avant-garde art of Modernism, the experimental Bauhaus workshops, and art in the last third of the twentieth century. In the emergence of innovative and complex experimentation in the medium of photography, the US American artist Man Ray played a prominent role. By alluding to his name in the title of her series of colored photograms, Ria Patricia Röder nods to the origin, recommencement, and continuation of this line of tradition, although, for her, these achievements only mark the beginning of her search for ways to maximize and expand photography's pictorial possibilities.

In the color photograms in her "*RAYDIATOR*" series, the artist purposefully oscillates between representation and abstraction, creating a tense connection between photography and painting, between the objective stringency of the photographic image and a free, (for the most part) abstract color design, which incorporates elements of classical Modernism as well as recent and current contemporary art. The glaringly bright colors in her works remind us of expressive painting as much as they do of virtual computer images and pieces of airbrush and graffiti street art. Despite this,

she does not employ painting materials, like brushes, palette knives, paints, or spray cans. Instead, she relies on electric lamps, light, glass filter plates, stencils, figures, and concrete objects. In the process of exposing the image, these leave a formal and colorful trace on the velvety matt surface of the photosensitive paper.

Ria Patricia Röder's art focuses on the human being and the exploration of the human figure. The figurations and fragments of bodies that appear as negatives on the photograms are, in terms of proportion and contour, the products of authentic shadows of human individuals, blocking the formative light and leaving individual traces of human existence. Each photogram derives from a series of experimental studies, in which the artist carefully examines the effects of certain details. This allows her to control the final image in its entirety after it has been developed. Her works are thus deliberately composed arrangements of colors and forms, in which representational elements sometimes function as mnemonic bridges to another reality.

In her "RAYDIATOR" series, Ria Patricia Röder opens a new chapter in the genre of full-body photograms by employing geometric pictorial elements and spaces of color to works whose dynamic pictorial effect is further enhanced by the often sweeping and agile gestures of the figures represented.