

MICHAELA MELIÁN

September 9–October 22, 2016

At Open Art the Barbara Gross Galerie will be showing new works by the Munich-based artist Michaela Melián in combination with a retrospective of earlier works from the days of her first exhibition at the gallery in 1989. Both formal and thematic aspects that are typical of Michaela Melián's work today can be traced back to the late 1980s. In artworks made of fabric, stitched works on paper, drawings, and in her sculptures and sound art, one can see playful expressions of the artist's study of social and cultural history themes. Melián poses questions about the roles of individuals, especially those of women over the course of history, as well as about the construction of identity and the relationship between human beings and technology.

Besides most recent works, made specifically for her exhibition this year at the Lenbachhaus' Kunstbau, we'll also be showing fabric pictures, embroidered table linens painted in monochromatic colors, and sculptures made of papier-mâché. In her series of drawings, *Kracauer* and *Subjekt* (1991), repetition turns female body parts into decorative stylizations and bizarre growths. Here, the human body becomes an ornament, lost in patterns and amorphous shapes.

In her project *Electric Ladyland* (2016)—based on the figure of the mechanical doll *Olympia* in Jacques Offenbach's opera *The Tales of Hoffman*—her theme is also the construct of men's idealized image of women, as well as the relationship between the analogue and the digital, the body and technology, and the places where they intersect. Motifs that have already been on display in the Lenbachhaus' Kunstbau will be developed further and reformatted: robot parts are combined with whole body prostheses from the seventeenth century and science fiction motifs to create new, complex figures. In this way one can see that works separated by twenty years share common contextual and formal aspects, and are related to each other.

Several works in the show refer to music as a constituent element in Melián's multi-layered oeuvre. One object made of two horn loudspeakers fills the exhibition space with sound. In the series *Frequency Hopping* (2013) the artist re-works motifs from technological consoles with the sewing machine, as she's done in earlier works on paper, so that the lines marking the course of the thread permeate the entire surface of the paper with their rhythmic stitches, like frequency waves. The audible hanging sculpture *Mannheim Chair* (2015), which is a chair covered in gray with built-in speakers, allows visitors to immerse themselves completely in the artist's compositions.

Michaela Melián (*1956 in Munich) lives and works in Hamburg and Munich. Since 2010 she has held a professorship for time-related media at HfbK Hamburg. She is member of the music group F.S.K. (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle). Exhibitions (selected): 2016/2017, Franz Marc Museum, Kochel; 2016, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus Munich; 2015, Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław, Kunsthalle Lingen; 2014, Badischer Kunstverein Karlsruhe, Kunsthalle Hamburg; 2013, K' Zentrum Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen; 2011/2012, Städtische Galerie Nordhorn, Shedhalle Zurich, Kunsthalle Bregenz; 2010, Memory Loops, art in public space, Munich; 2009, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, LUDLOW 38, New York; 2008, Cubitt Gallery London, Ulmer Museum, ZKM Karlsruhe