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→ The Remains of Cinema  
10 02 — 22 04 2018

Cooperation: Diagonale,  
Festival of Austrian Film;  
Austrian Film Museum

Press talk 09 02, 11 a.m.  
Opening 09 02, 6 p.m.



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→ with John Baldessari, Erica Baum, Joseph Beuys, Jörg Buttgereit, Anne Collier, Siegfried A. Fruhauf, Karl Holmqvist, Ryusuke Ito, Björn Kämmerer, Johann Lurf, Bernd Oppl, Katrin Plavčák, Eric Rondepierre, Constanze Ruhm, Hans Scheugl, Viktoria Schmid, Michaela Schwentner, Haim Steinbach, John Stezaker, Mika Taanila, Antoinette Zwirchmayr

Cooperation: Diagonale. Festival of Austrian Film:  
Austrian Film Museum

curated by Norbert Pfaffenbilcher and Sandro Droschl

Press talk: 09 02 2018, 11 a.m.

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Press Download: <http://www.km-k.at/en/press/>

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Crossing genres and generations, this exhibition contrasts historical and contemporary artistic positions with selected examples of historical films, in order to trace the impact and resonance of cinema on art and "cultural memory." Without a doubt, the enormous social relevance of film—the leading medium of the twentieth century—belongs to the past. Today, cinema is just one of many types of pop cultural entertainment, just a continuous flow in a chain of synchronized market segments.

The thematic show presents hybrid passions and individual obsessions revolving around the cinematic cosmos. The artworks in the show address "The Remains of Cinema," subjecting them to diverse transformational processes, and thus paying critical tribute to them. Besides films, the exhibition gathers a selection of film-specific works of art and artifacts left behind by the cinematic world, whereby the object and fetish character of these artifacts, as well as their specific materiality are of primary interest.

Participating artists will examine the disappearance of cinematic culture in diverse ways. Countless motifs from film history have long been part of our collective visual memory, and the artists often paraphrase them, not least because of their general comprehensibility—but this does not mean that affirmation, appropriation, and (representational) critique must be excluded. The artists will make use of historical, technical, formal-aesthetic, sociological, and psychological aspects of a global audio-visual film culture whose significance is, however, persistently dwindling.

In this context, "film" signifies an electro-mechanical, optical process, as well as a traditional form of audio-visual narration. The exhibition is able to question the

medium of film in ways that are not possible in the cinema, due to the existing, unshakeable disposition toward it. Besides the shift in context, other essentials include the material aspect of analogue film, above all, as well as the facets of memorabilia, merchandise, remnants, and relics of all kinds.

The show's melancholy title has been deliberately selected to emphasize ambiguity. It paraphrases the title of the famous novel and film "The Remains of the Day" (Kazuo Ishiguro, 1989; James Ivory, 1993) and literally alludes to the "remains," the "leftovers" of film productions. The title also raises the question as to what parts of "cinema culture" continue to live on in the era of smartphones and the Web 2.0. At the same time it could also be interpreted to mean that the cinema is already over and done with, leaving only remnants and ruins.

In the exhibition it also becomes clear that the relationship between cinema and art is thoroughly complicated and not always clear. This has to do with the very different modes of production, distribution, and presentation, as well as with the various models for creating value and their respective objectives. While commercial cinema offers amusing, escapist entertainment for the largest audience possible, the visual arts have—ever since the avant-garde was established in the twentieth century—also attempted to achieve openly effective, trenchant goals such as intellectual enlightenment, the transgression of formal boundaries, and aesthetic provocation.

The focus of this comprehensive exhibition is on the various characteristics of cinephilia, now under constant pressure. This is also why the Austrian Film Museum and private collectors have agreed to lend some of their original and special collections. The exhibits provided by the Austrian Film Museum have never been shown before in public. For example, an imposing collection of incandescent bulbs that were built into film projectors will be on display. Additionally, evidence of the passion of private collectors will be on view, including files full of newspaper clippings about long-dead film actors or original editions of historically relevant film magazines from the 1960s.

Besides the historical film artifacts, older works of art will be presented as historical cross-references. They are proof that cinephilia was widespread, even among avant-garde artists. For instance, the German conceptual artist Joseph Beuys took Ingmar Bergman's dystopian narrative film, "The Silence" (b/w, 1963) and ultimately silenced it altogether, by galvanizing the five rolls of film and repurposing them as sculpture. Almost the entire life's work of the influential American conceptual artist John Baldessari is based on making collages out of film stills and humorously reworking them.

Collage is a technique that can be found in several of the works on display: the French photographer Eric Ronddepierre, for example, arranges interiors from historical cinematic masterpieces into eerie, deserted spaces in a Cinemascope format. The Finnish filmmaker and artist Mika Taanila will show an extensive series of works in which he cuts up film books and makes surprising tableaux out of them.

All generations of Austrian artists are represented in this themed exhibition. One of the most important post-war avant-garde artists, Hans Scheugl, will show childhood drawings made from memory at the age of nine after visits to the movies. The middle generation is represented by, among others, Johann Lurf, who consolidates the famous animated logos of Hollywood studios to produce a wild and explosive montage. The young filmmaker Viktoria Schmid takes the demolition of the Kodak Company's factory building, where analogue film was once made, and turns it around, both formally and in terms of content. A loop playing backward creates a new factory out of the imposing clouds of ash, over and over again.

Katrin Plavčak, a painter raised in Styria, has created a multi-part series of works specifically for this show. These life-sized wooden figures depict characters from various decades of cinematic history. With this grotesque group of figures, Plavčak refers to the life-sized cardboard figures set up as advertising in movie theater lobbies.

The Japanese artist Ryusuke Ito will present his work for the first time in Austria. Drawing on film history, he builds animated model film sets, which resurrect the myths and heroes of the cinema as installations.

"The Remains of Cinema" is an extensive show, studded with prominent artists, produced in collaboration with the Austrian Film Museum and the Diagonale, the festival of Austrian film, which will also present a companion film program. Besides its own educational program and a weekly program of events—offering informative lectures and experimental concerts every Thursday at 6 p.m. free of charge—the project will be accompanied by the new online journal from the Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien, further exploring the show's themes.



Mika Taanila, *Down* from the series *Film Reader*, 2017. Courtesy of balzerprojects (Basel), photo: Johnny Korkman.



Victoria Schmid, *W O W*, 2017. Video loop, sound.