

'PERSONNE' : BECKY BEASLEY_EIKO GRIMBERG_GERT ROBIJNS

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Curated by Bettina Klein

The French term "personne" is derived from the Latin word "persona", which in antique theatre denoted a mask that covered the actor's head entirely. In psychology, the "persona" can be likened to an envelope of the Self, i.e. the personality in its outward manifestation and with all its social codifications, which on the one hand enables and facilitates the individual's social behaviour, while on the other hand providing protection and distance from the outer world.

The objects, photographs and texts in this exhibition deal with notions of individuality, the individual's positioning in relation to the group and his or her persistence in a more or less chosen retreat.

Becky Beasley photographs objects in isolated spatial situations and in front of neutral backdrops. Her handmade black-and-white prints emphasise the strong material presence of the objects they represent. **Hide** (2004/06) thus shows an object covered in a heavy cloth, while similar objects – some of which are still recognisable as furniture, whereas others are completely hidden – reappear in several photographs from the series of "Feral Works". Through concealment, the objects are deprived of their functional aspects, while their sculptural qualities come to the fore. Draping, in these works, is therefore not a decorative effect but an expressive metaphor of a condition.

The objects created by Gert Robijns convey a sense of immobility or, at least, of restrained mobility: a jacket thrown over a stick leaning against the wall, its pockets filled with big river pebbles (**Prêt à porter**, 2009), or a porcelain coffee pot to which the artist added seemingly decorative ball-shaped elements, which effectively prevent the container from being used (**Untitled**, 2009). By restraining any outward movement, these adjunctions of ballast effectively function like mooring buoys (corps-morts).

Ida Stieglitz-Heimann, a cousin of New York photographer Alfred Stieglitz, chose to retreat completely from social life the day she decided not to get up from bed, where she subsequently stayed until her death 37 years later. Eiko Grimberg's image and sound montage **Madwoman in the Attic** (2006) recounts this story by means of portrait photographs that Alfred Stieglitz took of his wife Georgia O'Keeffe over several decades. In Grimberg's second work in this exhibition, entitled **Tonspur** (2006), we hear the voice of German author Rolf Dieter Brinkmann reading a passage from "Ende 1969 habe ich aufgehört mit Literatur" (At the end of 1969 I stopped literature). The short text finishes with the words: "I don't like the plural, I like the individual. And now and now and now."