

## CHAMPAGNER GALOPP

cur.: Selma Meuli

9.6.–25.8.2024

Legend has it that the orchestral piece *Champagne Galop* (1845) was written by the Danish composer Hans Christian Lumbye after he skipped an invitation to an exclusive embassy celebration in Copenhagen. Lumbye supposedly never attended the festivities and instead went to his favorite pub. When he returned home late at night to tell his family about the party, he improvised this lively piece on the piano to accompany his made-up story. The pompous composition, a mere fantasy Lumbye's about the upper classes, is now considered a classic of orchestral music.

Loretta Fahrenholz has created similar mimetic linkages in her solo presentation *Champagner Galopp*. A spatial installation newly conceived for Kunsthau Biel presents two image series and several groups of objects immersed in magenta light. The 37-minute film *Trash The Musical* will be screened in the adjoining room. The exhibition explores questions around the increasing influence of technology on our understanding of identity and history.

The photo series *Court Society 1-23* (2024) was produced over the course of various gatherings of the Höfische Gesellschaft Berlin, which the artist documented photographically. The Höfische Gesellschaft is a local association whose heterogeneous members use role play, (often self-made) costumes and the joint rehearsal of historical dances to approximate the lifestyle of the aristocracy of the Baroque era. Similar to a LARP (Live Action Role Play), each member embodies a historical or semi-fictional character. Besides an imaginary journey through time, this re-enactment allows the club members temporary class mobility. Fahrenholz shot the photographs with analog film lenses attached to a digital medium-format camera. In some cases, the balanced pictorial compositions recall historical paintings, while some works look like spontaneous backstage snapshots in which canteen furniture and bar tables break the theatrical «fourth wall».

Five black and white portraits from the *Court Society* series were subsequently distorted by the artist using a digital filter effect, lending the depicted individuals cartoon-like features. The large-format pictures, reminiscent of both historical mirror cabinets and digital face-tuning effects, blend the aesthetics of courtly entertainment culture with present-day medial self-representation.

For the series *Limits and Fits IT 1-9* (2024), Fahrenholz manipulated digital reproductions of opulent baroque still lifes and vanitas paintings with software that mimics analogue video glitches, producing an ambiguous blend of painterly elements and an exaggerated 1980s vintage aesthetic.

Art at noon

At the table with the Kunsthau team: short guided tour followed by a lunch snack (with Epicerie Batavia)  
– Fri 21.6.2024, 12:15  
(de/fr)  
CHF 15.–

Registration until the day before: info@kbc.ch

Guided tours

– Thurs 4.7.2024, 18:30 (de)  
Führung mit Selma Meuli,  
Kuratorin  
– Thurs 8.8.2024, 18:30 (fr)  
Visite de l'exposition avec  
Selma Meuli, curatrice



Kunsthau Centre d'art  
Biel Bienne

Opening hours

Wed 12:00–18:00  
Thurs 12:00–20:00  
Fri 12:00–18:00  
Sa&Sun 11:00–18:00

In both works, Fahrenholz investigates correlation between performative appropriations of styles and contexts and the technical principle of algorithmic AI technologies whose models are also trained to reprocess archived content: Text-to-image generators synthesize content from a pool of categorized data (e.g. «baroque») through a computational process. Similar to the meetings of the Höfische Gesellschaft, the result is not an authentic reconstruction, but a hybrid intersection of the available information. While referring to heterogeneous sources (e.g. paintings, cinematic representations, comics and illustrations, private pictures of costume parties, etc.), the outcome exists detached from their original value contexts and spaces of experience.

The eponymous spatial installation *Champagner Galopp* consists of storage boxes filled with colored water and draped with food and jewelry, evoking ephemeral still lifes or store displays. Re-enacting the logic of AI algorithms, the showcases take up motifs from the exhibition while also referring to Biel as a leading production site for luxury watches. The faux brand accessories function as placeholders of a desired prosperity, while the inferior production quality of the surrogates still signifies the underlying social distinctions. In the exhibition, the watches and rings find themselves next to common potatoes and cucumbers, both equally stripped of their authenticity and history.

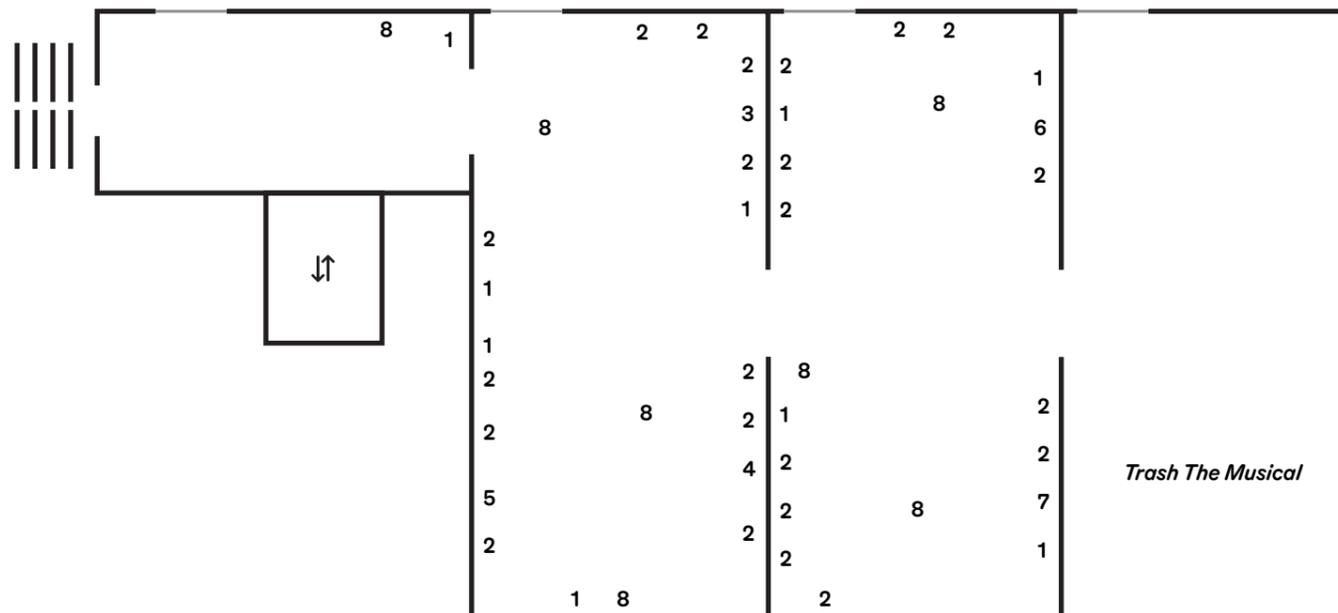
Text: Luzie Meyer

The film *Trash The Musical* (2023) was produced in collaboration with performance artist and actor Alicia McDaid. In the film, we follow McDaid from Los Angeles, where she lives, to Philadelphia, her former hometown, to clear out the house of her recently deceased uncle. During the months needed to sort the chaotic property's contents the house becomes her daily stage for performing musical numbers and bizarre self-presentations. The film is made mostly from material shot by McDaid, including scenes that were initially made for social media platforms. Surrounded by her uncle's belongings piled up around her, McDaid slips into the roles of celebrities and movie characters, performing makeup tutorials, TikTok dances and social-critical rants, edited by Fahrenholz into a wild post-cinematic collage. In *Trash The Musical*, the house and its contents provide a stage for McDaid but also function as a mirror. Working through the mess, she radically explores personal anxieties and questions of ageing, unfulfilled dreams, and the difference between art and trash.

With: Alicia McDaid

Cinematography and Social Media Content: Alicia McDaid  
 Editing: Abdulmonim Twebti, Loretta Fahrenholz, Leonie Nagel; Color Grading: Abdulmonim Twebti; Visual Effects: Jak Ritger & K8 Howl; Production: Loretta Fahrenholz, Alicia McDaid, Leonie Nagel; Sound Design: Steffen Martin; Costumes and Makeup: Alicia McDaid; Sound Mix: Jochen Jezussek; Music: Alicia McDaid, Dead Elm, Steffen Martin, TRJJ; Titel: HIT

## GALERIES



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|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | <i>Serie Limits and Fits IT 1-9, 2024</i><br>Pigment print | 6 | <i>Kurfürst Friedrich August von Sachsen, 2024</i><br>C-Print | <i>Trash The Musical, 2023</i><br>HD, colour and sound<br>37'24" |
| 2 | <i>Serie Court Society 1-23, 2024</i><br>Pigment print     | 7 | <i>Graf Alissandro di Calioistro, 2024</i><br>C-Print         |  |
| 3 | <i>Cecilia von Pannwitz, 2024</i><br>C-Print               | 8 | <i>Serie Champagner Galopp, 2024</i><br>mixed media           |  |
| 4 | <i>Lady Edith, 2024</i><br>C-Print                         |   |   |  |
| 5 | <i>Eleonore Fürstin zu Schwarzenberg, 2024</i><br>C-Print  |   |   |  |

All works: court. the artist and Galerie Buchholz

Production assistant: Sarah Rosengarten  
 Camera assistant, technical effects: Abdulmonim Twebti  
 Image processing: Philipp Ruh

Many thanks to Höfische Gesellschaft e.V., Berlin; Das Foto Image Factory, Berlin; and Kane Do, Sabine Fahrenholz, Peter Kölbl and Leonie Nagel; Galerie Buchholz, Daniel Buchholz, Christopher Müller and Lena Zimmermann.