

MINI/Goethe-Institut  
Curatorial Residencies

Ludlow  
38

# Johannes Paul Raether Identitecture

April 7–May 4, 2014  
Opening: Sunday, April 6, 6–8 PM

MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38 is pleased to present the solo exhibition *Identitecture* by Berlin-based artist Johannes Paul Raether. *Identitecture* presents three of the mutating drag personalities Raether has developed over the past five years: *Transformella—Queen of Debris*, *Protektorama—World Healing Witch*, and *Swarm—Being of the Infected Metropolis*. Over the course of one month, the three personae occupy the gallery space to interact with one another. From time to time they will appear and lecture in New York's public space, and open a dialogue with other artists and theoreticians.

*Transformella—Queen of Debris* examines the future of human reproduction and its relationship with capitalist production: In the age of artificial insemination, pre-implantation diagnosis, and surrogacy, human reproduction has become globalized and industrialized. Serial infant production by way of surrogate mothers has been outsourced to developing countries such as India. Raether's *Transformella* does not fundamentally reject these new technologies, but makes a case for appropriating the possibilities afforded by technological models of reproduction as instruments in the political debate on self-determination, collectivity, and society. Raether's second character, *Protektorama—The World-Healing Witch*, is a smurf-like figure equipped with occult objects of her own creation, such as cheat-sheet walking-sticks, 3G Smartfon-candy-fetishes, and ceremonial banners. *Protektorama* has constructed several anticapitalist cult spots, including the dark and rigid world-healing forest and a flowery patchwork carpet to attack the ghostly empire of the capitalist relations of production in the age of mega-commodity streams. Her central thesis is that humankind is possessed by the abstract principles of capital, and thereby has rendered itself a prosthesis of its own digital devices. The *Swarm—Being of the Infected Metropolis* is Raether's most recently developed character. Its ongoing research combines the analysis of techno-dystopian theories in the field of artificial intelligence with a critical city-planning discourse.

Johannes Paul Raether's practice can be described as that of an anticapitalist *identitect*, who creates a growing set of fictional identities and roaming personalities. His creations occur in diverse places to preach alternative models of knowledge production, self-organization, and reproduction. Though they have traveled separately to Tehran, Johannesburg, Varanasi and Florence, the gallery space in New York hosts the first imaginary encounter between three of them. As an analogue to this continuous transformation of identities, Ludlow 38 is transformed into a cave-like, tribal-futurist environment, comprised of digital interfaces as well as low-tech fetish objects, and manually-crafted cultic tools. Beyond being autonomous works of art, the artifacts of this installational scenario constitute the means for establishing a unique cosmos for each of his characters, as well as the backdrops and props for their appearances.

Johannes Paul Raether lives and works in Berlin. During his studies at Berlin University of the Arts, he was part of various self-organized projects, such as the artist-run educational initiative *Freie Klasse Berlin*. He was a member of the studio collective and community space *basso* from 2006 to 2011. In cooperation with the performance duo *Discoteca Flaming Star* he organized several performance events and co-edited the book *Show, Demonstrate, Exchange. Performance—Art—Academy* (2013). Raether has exhibited and performed throughout Africa, Europe and the Middle East, including at the KUMU Art Museum, Tallinn (2010), Kunsthaus Bregenz (2012), Goethe-Institut South Africa, Johannesburg (2012), KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2013), Venus & Apoll, Düsseldorf (2013), and Savvy Contemporary, Berlin (2013). His solo exhibitions include *Galerie September*, Berlin (2011), *Künstlerhaus Stuttgart* (2012), and *Bad Reputation*, Los Angeles (2014). He publishes regularly in *Texte zur Kunst*, and since 2013 has been a guest professor at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg.

## Further Events:

### *Swarm—Being of the Infected Metropolis*

Shopping appearance  
Saturday, April 12, 5 PM  
Canal Street at Broadway

### Kerstin Stakemeier in conversation with the *Swarm—Being of the Infected Metropolis*

Saturday, April 12, 7 PM  
Goethe-Institut Wyoming Building, 5 East 3rd Street

### *Transformella—Institute for Reproductive Futures*

Performance  
Wednesday, April 16, 7 PM  
off-site

### *Protektorama—The World Healing Witch*

Performance  
Wednesday, April 23, 8:30 PM  
off-site

Curated by Eva Birkenstock

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