

Cynthia Cruz, "An Artist Remixes Her Archive as an Act of Creation," *Hyperallergic*, October 27, 2015.

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GALLERIES

An Artist Remixes Her Archive as an Act of Creation

by Cynthia Cruz on October 27, 2015



Cosima von Bonin, 'CvB Singles Uptown Remix' (2015), installation view (all photos courtesy of Petzel Gallery)

CvB Singles Uptown Remix, Cosima von Bonin's current show at Petzel's uptown gallery, is a remixing of her work. The small gallery contains artworks from 2000 to 2011, all of which have already been included in her previous Petzel shows. If you've seen any of those, you've already seen much of what's being displayed here. And yet the show is entirely new.

By presenting her pieces in new iterations, von Bonin gives each object a new meaning depending upon what else it's situated against. Which pieces she chooses from her vast array of artworks is as important as where in the space she places them. Just as positioning two

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words together creates a new, third meaning, placing two artworks together creates a new work, in a way. Von Bonin has also previously curated the work of other artists into her own shows, and by placing her pieces next to others’, she is able, again, to draw new meanings out of her art.



Cosima von Bonin, 'CvB Singles Uptown Remix' (2015), installation view

In *CvB Singles Uptown Remix*, we are presented with 12 pieces: “Untitled (The Grey Saint Bernhard with Box)” (2006), a giant stuffed Saint Bernhard; a room-sized soft octopus called “Total Produce (Morality)” (2010); soft sculptures of a fence called “Ohne Titel (fence)” (2000); a large mushroom titled “Ohne Titel (Pilz #78)” (2004); a kind of mobile of grey stuffed animals called “Thrown out of Drama School” (2008), “Smoke” (2008/2011), and “CVB & Michael Wuerthle” (2011); and six cotton wool canvases.

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Cosmia von Bonin, "GEORGE" (2007), wool, cotton, loden, velvet, 109.45 x 120.08 inches

Within the canvases, there are main images and then there are what appear to be shadows — the result of fine stitching or bits of fabric sewn in. The shadows act as doubles or alternatives, similar to the doubling that occurs by repeating the same image in different works, and also the shadows provided by von Bonin's mixing other artists into her shows. In this way, the shadows become iterations or variations akin to remixes of songs on albums. In a few of the canvases, von Bonin has also included what appear to be excerpts from letters as well as commentary. For example, at the bottom right hand of "George" (2007) is text from a get-well card. It reads:

*Lieber George! Wir wünschen Ihnen eine schnell züruck- fahrt von krankheit nach
Gesund!*

Margaret Mangau

[Dear George! We wish you a quick return trip from sickness to health!]

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Cosima von Bonin, "SMOKE 2008/2011 (CVB & MICHEL WUERTHLE)" (2011), steel, lacquer, plate-glass, spruce; SMOKE: Perspex, steel, lacquer, neon lamp, light-emitting diode, 129.92 x 46 x 28 inches
(click to enlarge)

In this canvas there are two white-gloved hands of Mickey (or Minnie) Mouse, Donald Duck, a ghost character in a cardinal's hat and thick black glasses, and the profile of what appears to be a man smoking. Near the text at the bottom right of the canvas are images of another set of Mickey or Minnie Mouse hands, though this time they are merely shadows: all we see is the outline made from white stitching. Also: another figure walking on a plank and a smaller figure playing drums on a set of mushrooms.

In the same way that each object in the gallery informs the one next to it, producing a new meaning, von Bonin's canvases each function as a "room" of assembled objects. In the case of "George," the room is filled with too many objects, and the result is a feeling of fatigue.

Moreover, every object within the canvas is packed with meaning. Take, for instance, the image of a man's face, in profile, smoking. His smoke stream is the same one in the sculpture "Smoke 2008/2011 (CVB & Michael Wuerthle)." The sculpture informs the canvas. Furthermore, the sculpture is itself a reference to German artist Martin Kippenberger's streetlamp sculptures.



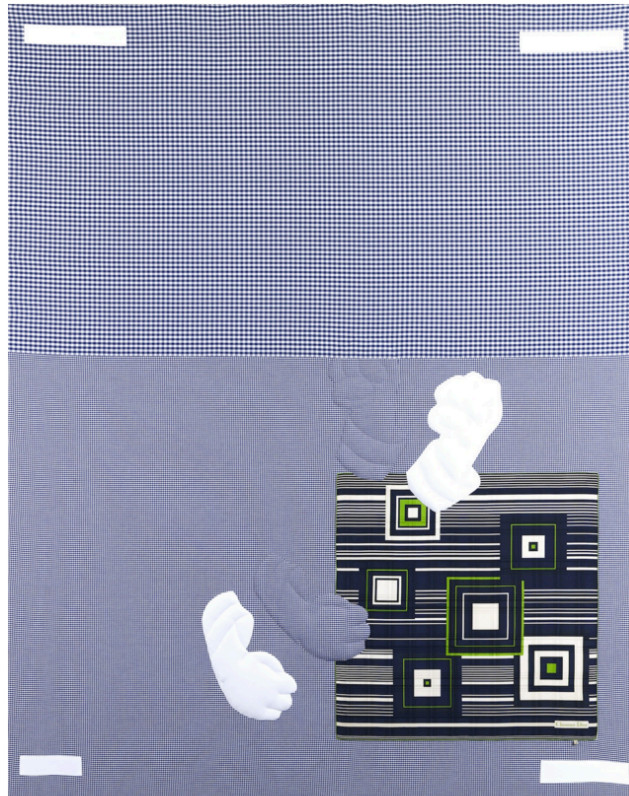
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Working from a large oeuvre, an archive, and sampling only bits at a time, von Bonin speaks to our inability to contain information, the endless streams of images and data we are constantly faced with, and the exhaustion that results from this endeavor. Each new iteration of her work is one more attempt to start again.

Von Bonin remixes her work over and over as if to demonstrate that one stubborn language — her own oeuvre — can, in fact, be made new. Her shows, then, become a kind of laboratory for language. The Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann wrote, "*Keine neue Welt ohne Neue Sprache*" [No new world without a new language], but in this day and age, how does one make language fresh? One way is to attempt to create new words from scratch. Another, as is the case with von Bonin, is to build a new language by remixing and constantly re-presenting each object in a new context, infusing new meaning into the words with art.



Cosima von Bonin, "NON-ZERO ENTHUSIASM" (2009), cotton, silk, fleece, 90.55 x 79.92 inches

Cosima von Bonin: CvB Singles Uptown Remix *continues at Petzel Gallery (35 E 67th Street, Upper East Side, Manhattan) until October 31.*

<http://hyperallergic.com/248604/an-artist-remixes-her-archive-as-an-act-of-creation/>