

precedented sales prices making video art, and video artists made him an artist for the wealthy elite. Koons effortlessly deflected the question, insisting that

making video art, and video artists winning Oscars, the border between art and advanced popular culture is growing ever more porous and more confused. This erosion of “seriousness”

Illustrations:
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Progressive popular culture continues to intersect with the art vanguard.

Jeffrey Deitch is a dealer, art advisor, writer and exhibition organizer. He has curated several exhibitions including “Artificial Nature” (1990) and “Post Human” (1992). From 1996–2010, he ran Deitch Projects in Soho and from 2010–13 he served as director of the Los Angeles MOCA.

his imagery was available for free for everyone and that generally art images were accessible to more people than ever before. When I was a teenager in the 1960s, the new music was available to everyone for free on the radio. Pop music was the great cultural connector. The visual imagery of advertising and popular culture was equally ubiquitous, linking everyone who watched the same three television channels. With the exception of transcendent icons like the Mona Lisa, however, fine art images were difficult to access. Today, images of vanguard art are as accessible on the Internet as music on the radio. This instant and free accessibility of art imagery is one of numerous challenges to the structure of the contemporary art world as the progressive side of popular culture continues to intersect with the art vanguard. With actors making performance art, Oscar-winning film directors



has incensed a vocal segment of the art community, but there also exists an enthusiastic new audience, indifferent to whether their cultural stimulation comes from paintings in an austere white cube gallery or the storylines of a riveting television show like *Empire*.

The New York art world is currently enjoying the controversy surrounding MoMA’s Björk retrospective. Many of those who are angry about a progressive pop star diluting the seriousness of the museum are also upset about the museum having given Marina Abramović the platform to transform herself from an obscure performance artist to pop stardom. Whether the critics are justified or not in attacking the Björk show for a lack of academic rigor, both Björk and Abramović are expanding and inspiring the audience for vanguard art and are expanding the definition of art and the artist. Neo-conservative critics are calling for a return to “standards,” arguing against the increasing presence of popular culture in museums. This will be difficult to accomplish if many of the most interesting artists continue to challenge the old barriers. Ultimately it will not be the



curmudgeons and critics who will be the arbiters of art’s new direction. It is always the artists. It will be fascinating to watch how the next artistic generation deals with the new audience’s openness and fluency in visual culture. Will it be art for all, or art for the elite? ☹

Hans Ulrich Obrist and Simon Castets interview young artist DARJA BAJAGIĆ

In a recent tweet you said, “There are people who believe that things that shouldn’t be there mustn’t be shown.” Do you believe that pornography shouldn’t be there? And if it is there, that it must be shown?

A conservative estimate would be that 80% of my tweets are sourced from elsewhere; that one was taken from a *New York Times* article, “Messy Humanity, Warts, Dreams and All,” on Ulrich Seidl’s *Paradise* trilogy. At fuller length, it reads: “Speaking of a scene in *Dog Days* in which two men torment a women, Mr. Seidl, 60, said by phone from Vienna, “There are people who believe that things that shouldn’t be there mustn’t be shown.” I believe pornography has

THE FUTURA 89+ SERIES FEATURES INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS, WRITERS, ACTIVISTS, ARCHITECTS, FILMMAKERS, SCIENTINTS AND ENTREPRENEURS WHO WERE BORN IN OR AFTER 1989.





a place in this world, as does everything else. I appreciate its subversiveness.

You started collecting, and working with, these kinds of images as a teenager, eventually using them for zines. What compelled you to start collecting them?

One of my earliest memories—at six years of age—is of taking photographs of a television screen at my uncle Boris’s house, on which my cousin

The image search and collection process is like hunting.

Raško and I were watching a pornographic film. Later, as a pre-teenager, I was collecting images—both pornographic and not—of girls on the Internet to use as aliases on various social networking websites. I would habitually browse, looking at images of girls—first out of boredom, then curiosity—in my father’s Playboys, and via WebTV cha-

Previous page: *A00*, 2014

Left: *Devil Girl Stamp*, 2014

Below: *Come to the Dark Side We Have Cookies!!!*, 2014

Right: *Kill Bill: After*, 2014

rooms and forums. This was not an art project—I was just socially awkward. Those images were my friends.

The beginning of including these kinds of images into an art practice, it took the form of cut-up, deconstructed collages: juxtaposing a bruised thigh with a pattern from a blanket. I then started recreating the “collages”

I was collecting online—“collages” as in everything, ranging from book covers to website layouts, disparaging celebrity photographs with text overlays from forums—to be juxtaposed with those original “collages” from the printed zines. I would liken the search and collection to hunting.

Your earlier works were very minimalist paintings. Many of your current works still carry through that minimalist, monochrome aesthetic, but overall, your work has changed quite drastically. What prompted this change? How did the transition unfold?

I do not see them as so different, ultimately—rather, only at a surface level. The black paintings were commenced at Yale, during my very last month in the graduate program. They stemmed from my desire to combine images from my collection with new forms; I’d done the same thing earlier with videos.

In the gray paintings, the images had been scattered about, often nearly concealed. The images in the black paintings are more available—partially obscured at times by flaps, but still, more available.

During the process, I thought a lot about Ad Reinhardt—his “ultimate” paintings, his satirical cartoons—and Thomas Hirschhorn—his collages, and his texts about his collages. I like that they are always suspicious, are not taken seriously, resist information and facts, are unprofessional, create a truth of their own....

You have said that you want to present the images as “blank images,” by “forcing the viewer to come to terms with all of that baggage and then ignoring it simultaneously” in order to see the images on a formal level. When you ignore that baggage, what do you see in the images?

I don’t think a surface reading of any one thing is an efficient one. By ignoring the primary reading—the first impact, the “baggage”—one becomes more open to exploring other perspectives and comes to terms with assumptions and beliefs. This is an act of neutralization, or desexualization: it occurs not only in the works’ imagery employed, but in the viewer as well.

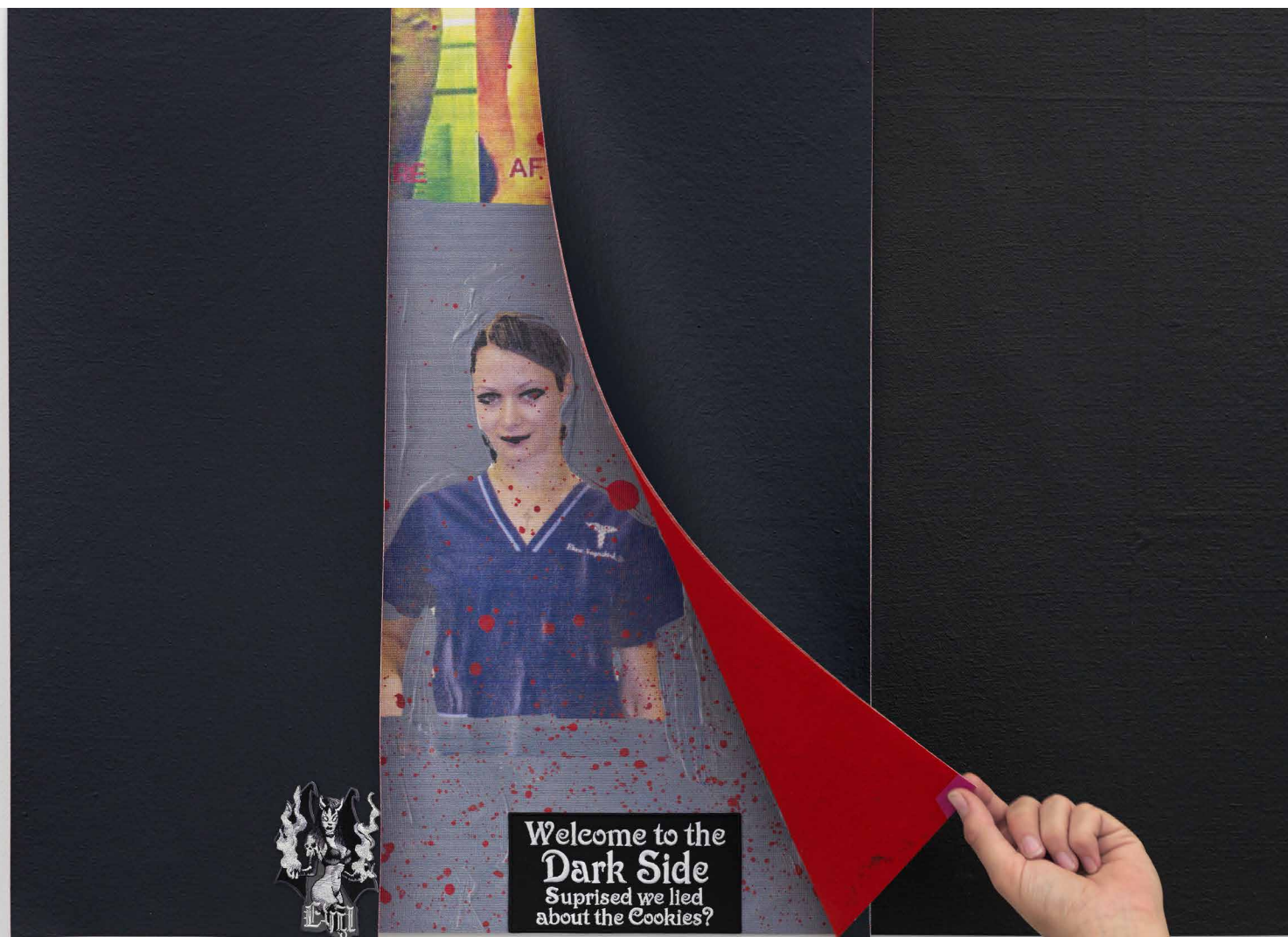
Seeing the images on a formal level is one way of beginning to set aside, the “baggage” to and see the images from a different perspective. For example, you might consider a prop you’d missed: 1) “a girl is sitting on a bed, simultaneously rubbing herself and reading a book” versus 2) “a girl is sitting on

a bed, simultaneously rubbing herself and reading *The Fermata* by Nicholson Baker” (see *Sample XXX Puzzle-- Pin-up Land™ Cum-centration*, 2013, at 6:20). It’s emancipatory.

There are several recurring motifs, in your work: chess boards, puzzle pieces and crosswords. What is the significance of these images for you?

Chess signifies a back-and-forth between things. The board’s pattern has associations of duality, polarity—ideas still relevant to me. Puzzle pieces signify parts of a greater, unknown “whole.” Crosswords signify that there are spaces to fill—they are left empty: you have to figure it out yourself.

89plus is a long-term, international, multi-platform research project co-founded by Simon Castets and Hans Ulrich Obrist, investigating the generation of innovators born in or after 1989 through conferences, books, periodicals, residencies and exhibitions. 89plus.com



Your recent work also appropriates material such as serial killers' letters and drawings. How do you see this content relating to the other content? Are this and pornography both representations of "evil"?

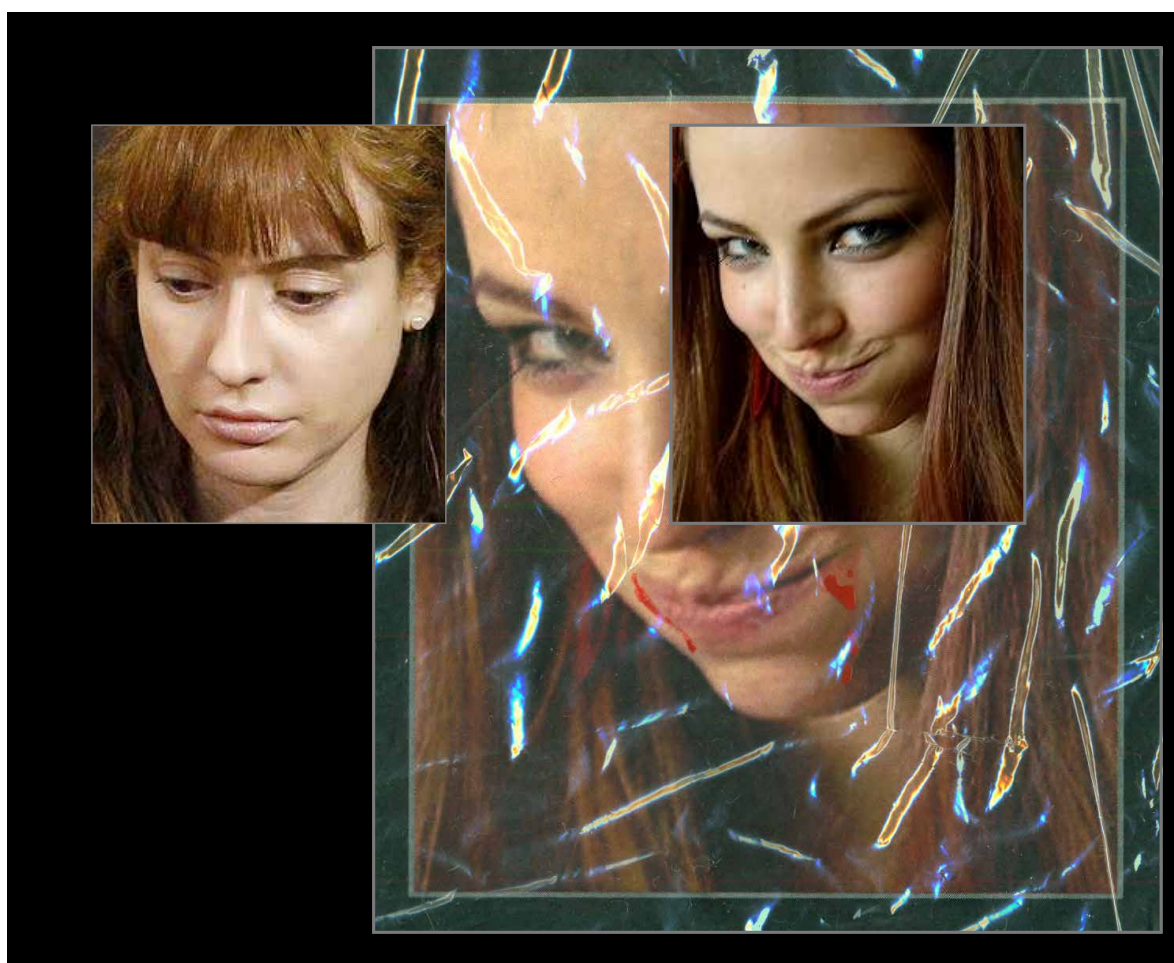
No, they are not representations of "evil" because—to quote Alain Badiou—"Evil does not exist except as a judgment made."

I collect serial killers' ephemera that depict she-devils, pornographic actresses, and other representations of women. It relates to the pornographic images—they both raise questions about conceptions of "good" and "evil" and are forms of collective self-expression—pure, profane, free.

You've said you "don't think that women need to be saved." Can you explain what you mean by this?

This was in response to a question about my "refusal to be an activist about my subject." I do not want to rehabilitate anyone, or not to rehabilitate anyone. That is not my job.

You avoid being photographed and in the past have reported any tagged photos of you on Facebook. What is it about



your own image being captured and shared that you don't like?

I prefer the focus to be placed on the artworks, including the girls in the artworks—their faces, their gazes. Somehow, they seem more representative of me. There is more of me to see in them than in me.

What kind of social media do you use / not use and why?

I use Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter. I use Instagram to share my own images; Tumblr for news and updates; Twitter

I appreciate the subversiveness of pornography.

Above: *Lost Girls (Ft. Ice Cream Killer)*, 2014

All images courtesy of the artist.

for words. I do not use Facebook—it feels too personal and invasive.

Would you follow yourself on Instagram?

I mostly post pictures of awkward, amusing texts ("Call Me! / I'll Whip Your Ass Purple!"), or semi-gore images from B-horror movie reviews, or cute animals. I am into all this stuff, so yes, I would follow myself!

We are interested in compiling a book of interviews based on banal security questions asked when one sets up an online account. In what year was your father born?

1954.

What is your mother's maiden name?

Radović.

What was the name of your elementary school?

Pakistan International School, and Donley Elementary School.

What is your oldest sibling's birthday month and year?

I have one sibling, and his name is Filip; his birthday month is November and year is 1978.

What is your favorite color?

Gray.

For the 89plus Marathon in 2013, you participated digitally through your work *The A Project*, in which you checked out a book from your university's library and marked out every appearance of the letter A, keeping a tal-

ly along the way. Where does a project like this sit in your oeuvre?

I don't think a surface reading of any one thing is an efficient one.

The book was *Elogio della menzogna* (ed.: Salvatore S. Nigro)—Italian, of 154 marked pages. Online, its "subjects" are listed as "Truthfulness and Falsehood" and "Deception— Early works to 1800." The cover of the book features the painting *Portrait of a Woman of the Hofer Family*, dated about 1470 and belong-

Darja Bajagić (Montenegrin, b. 1990) is an artist who lives and works in New York. She is represented by Room East, New York.

ing to the collection of the National Gallery, London; the artist remains unknown, as does the sitter. The de-

scription of the painting on the National Gallery's website reads, "On her headdress is a fly, either a symbol of mortality or a reminder of the artist's skills of illusion."

I was drawn to this indecipherability, the sense of mystery. The project began as a passive, then active nihilistic endeavor—and a questioning of meaningfulness. I dwelled on this idea: "Thinking is an arbitrary fiction, the false sign of an equally false inner experience." ☹

Milovan Farronato and Goshka Macuga share memories of STROMBOLI

AS THE CULTURAL CALENDAR INCREASINGLY BECOMES A FEAST OF OPPORTUNITIES TO FLY OFF THE BEATEN TRACK, THE PANORAMA SERIES TRAVELS THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF WRITERS AND ARTISTS.

All images: Goshka Macuga Courtesy of the artist.

MF: I remember the first time I saw you was underwater. It was August 2009, and you were diving for sea urchins, wearing a one-piece bathing suit, kept together by strings and ribbons revealing your pale skin. I, on the other hand, was wearing a makeshift burkini to protect myself from the sun. When we first met, we were swimming. The water was dark, warm and deep; the mountains around us, collapsed and eroding, seemed in constant flux.

We had spoken before this encounter—on the phone, never in person. You had arrived in Stromboli from Venice, where you were participating in the Biennale with one of your first tapestries. We were in front of the Sciarra del Fuoco, the only area where the volcano's lava meets the sea yet without endangering the two nearby villages: Stromboli and Ginostra. We were swimming at the feet of the active volcano—a triangular podium resonating with loud opinions spoken from his crater every fifteen minutes or so. At the time, the volcano had three mouths; today, he has thirteen. That trinity of voices has now become a chorus. I realize I've been speaking of the

