

BERLIN

ANJA KNECHT GALERIE IM PARKHAUS

"Des(s)erts" was a retrospective of works from the past two years, and the first solo show by Anja Knecht in Berlin, allowing the public to forge a path through the artist's idiosyncratic pictorial ideas.

The group of works "Rejeté — Rejeton" was on show in the foyer. They consisted of large-format color photographs and slide projectors, set into the locked shutters. One of the artist's chief concerns seems to be to send the viewer's efforts at classification off into the void initially, and then to confront him with his own imagination. These participatory processes went so far that in the gallery's guest-book some visitors said they suspected there were interactive elements in the installation, while in the technical sense these were entirely absent. The motifs of the photographs and slides were rounded, unfocused bodies, with gently modulated surface structures suggesting chewy sweets, contraceptives, or microscopic pictures of bacteria that stood out in isolation against the black background. The visual impression oscillated between high and low tech, between pinhole camera photography and electron microscope imagery.

The second space in the exhibition recalled a Beckett-like stage with a table and two chairs; above the table a video beam projected similarly ominous forms on a metal bowl for the visitor's visual consumption. The installation was completed by the presence of the viewer at the table, trying to fix and interpret the fleeting, vague image on the surface of the bowl. The faint light of the space emanated from a semi-transparent foil which closed off a passageway, and which had a similar shape projected on it from the adjoining space. The third and final space was completely dark. From the corners of the room words echoed from loudspeakers; entitled "Simple Words," they sometimes overlaid one another, and then

fell completely silent again. The strangeness of the various languages produced a network of sounds that had as much in common with music as with language. Knecht's installations translated the loss of personal identity and singular experience in a media-dominated world fixated on the effects of commodity recognition, into a new, previously unheard of language.

Barbara Hess

(Translated from German by Shaun Whiteside)

R E V I E W S

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Anja Knecht, *Rejeté — Rejeton*, 1996. Cibachromes, each 140 x 90 cm.