



PRESS RELEASE

Kunstforum der TU Darmstadt as part of the 11th Darmstadt Days of Photography

“Bizarre Escapes – Humour in Photography”

*Status August 5, 2020*



Alexey Shlyk, FROM THE series: THE APPLESEED NECKLACE (Belgium/Belarus, 2016-2018) ©Artist

**HOME SWEET HOME (Sept. 12th to Nov. 15th, 2020)**  
**A public exhibition, including at ‘Konsum Mathildenhöhe’**

**Press Tour: Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 11:00 a.m.**

Beginning at ‘Konsum Mathildenhöhe’, Pützerstr. 6, 64287, Darmstadt, finishing at Friedensplatz

**Vernissage: Saturday, September 12, 6 p.m. at Friedensplatz**

**Photo and press material at: <https://bit.ly/3hhZARR>**

*The Kunstforum der TU Darmstadt is taking part in the themed exhibition HOME SWEET HOME during the 11<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt Days of Photography and will present approximately 90 photographic works by international artists at various exhibition locations throughout the city*



and at 'Konsum Mathildenhöhe', including a contribution to this year's main theme, » Bizarre Escapes – Humour in Photography«.

**HOME SWEET HOME** brings together international stars from the art photography scene, such as **Erwin Wurm (Austria)**, **Ren Hang (China)**, and the pioneers of staged photography **Anna and Bernhard Blume**. Also showing for the first time in Germany will be **AdeY (Great Britain)**, **Pixy Liao (China)**, **Alexey Shlyk (Belarus)**, as well as the Finnish artist **Iiu Susiraja**.

The artists taking part in the exhibition Home Sweet Home will be showing a wide range of artistic and humorous reactions to 'Home Sweet Home'. Even more important today than ever is the question: Who am I and how do I want to live? Reduced to our own four walls, reflecting on ourselves and our world moves to the foreground– and perhaps opens up opportunities for change.

In HOME SWEET HOME our own home becomes an unconventional projection scene for various arguments– with ourselves, with our own past and future – or with our partner. Our 'home sweet homes' serve as refuges and shelters in which – inspired by our imaginations – whimsical opportunities for escape arise.

### **HOME SWEET HOME – the choice of artists**



Erwin Wurm, Indoor and Outdoor sculptures Cahors, 1999, c-print,  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020



**Erwin Wurm** is considered one the most successful artists of today. The issue in his life is: What is a sculpture? Or put another way: What are the boundaries of sculpture? “Can the concept of ridiculousness be a sculpture? Can the concept of embarrassment be a sculpture? I’ve been thinking about this for years.” (Erwin Wurm)

For many years he has been working on a multi-layered work that could be described as an expansion of the concept of plastic/sculpture. His work incorporates material sculptures, actions, videos, photos, drawings and books. As well as photographs from the ‘Dark Series’ (Polaroids, 2018) and the ‘Noodle Sculptures’ (2016), for example, his most famous video projection ‘Am I a house?’ (2005) will also be shown at the HOME SWEET HOME exhibition.



Erwin Wurm, video projection *Am I a house?* (2005)



Anna and Bernhard Blume, A psychopathic scene from ‘Home Sweet Home’ ©VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020, on loan from the Deutsche Börse (German Stock Exchange) Photography Foundation



Dealing with the everyday in one's own four walls is also a theme of the photo series 'Home Sweet Home' (1985-1990) by **Anna and Bernhard Blume**. Seen here is the artist Anna Blume dressed up as a stereotypical housewife who is not only losing the contents of her house, but also her grip. First the kitchen furnishings go flying through the air like magic, and later on so does the mistress of the house. The distinctive picture stories by the artist couple are full of wit, madness and irony. The black and white images parody the traditional roles of suburban life. They reflect the ideas of Dada, as well as Fluxus (Intermedia Movement).



Ren Hang, Untitled (Detail), 2012, © Artist, Courtesy Estate of Ren Hang and Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong

The Chinese photographer **Ren Hang** (born 1987 in Chang Chung, died 2017 in Beijing) plays with contemporary art along the lines of Dada and Surrealism. Using humourous, playful images, his analogous photographs tell stories about feelings, yearnings, and fears, and about the loneliness of a young generation in China. They stand as symbols for this generation's rebellion against the conventions of a restrictive communist regime in which nakedness and sexual freedom are under the control and censure of the state.



Pixy Liao, „Relationships works best when each partner knows their proper place“, 2019, © Artist

In her series ‘experimental relations’, begun in 2007, **Pixy Liao**, born in Shanghai, plays with the understanding of masculinity and femininity in relationships.

“As a woman brought up in China, I used to think I could only love someone who is older and more mature than me, who can be my protector and mentor. Then I met my current boyfriend, Moro. Since he is 5 years younger than me, I felt that the whole concept of relationships changed, all the way around. I became a person who has more authority & power. One of my male friends even questioned how I could choose a boyfriend the way a man would choose a girlfriend. And I thought, "Damn right. That’s exactly what I’m doing, & why not!"

I started to experiment with this relationship. I would set up all kinds of situations for Moro and me to perform in the photos. My photos explore the alternative possibilities of heterosexual relationships. They question what is the norm of heterosexual relationships. What will happen if man & woman exchange their roles of sex & roles of power? Because my boyfriend is Japanese, and I am Chinese, this project also describes a love and hate relationship.

This project is an ongoing project which grows with our real relationship but is never meant to be a documentation.” (Pixy Liao)



Pixie Liao will be shown in Germany as part of the HOME SWEET HOME exhibition for the first time. She has won grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Santo Foundation Individual Artist Awards, the Jimei x Arles International Photo Festival Madame Figaro Women Photographers Award, the En Foco's New Works Fellowship and the LensCulture Exposure Award.



Iiu Susiraja, *Lovely wife*, 2018, © Artist

The Finnish artist **Iiu Susiraja** presents herself on a very personal level – she stages herself with everyday accessories in the most absurd poses in her idiosyncratic ‘Selfies’ within her own four walls. She will be recognised in Germany for the first time with approximately 15 photographs. “I appear in my own pictures. This is practical since I’m always available and I can get up to whatever I feel like doing”, says the artist. One might assume that she is trying for an Erwin Wurm-type of wittiness, but in reality Susiraja’s photos are always a bit sad. Her humour is more dead-pan, which makes the photos comical, but at the same time they come across as a little creepy. She looks directly at the camera and forces the viewer to make eye contact while she poses with accessories: an umbrella, high heels, scissors, pillows, cake, and



fish. Susiraja knows that a good comedian needs props. “It all starts with an object. Funnily enough, some people think I want to criticize the ideals of beauty or address some other social issue. But that’s not my intention.” (Source: Monopol Magazin, Text: Philipp Hindahl, 21.3.2019)



Alexey Shlyk, from the series THE APPLESEED NECKLACE, The chicken house, © Künstler

In HOME SWEET HOME, one’s own home becomes unconventional projected surfaces of various arguments, not only with itself, but with its own origins, as shown in the works of **Alexey Shlyk**. Born in Minsk, Belarus in 1986, this award-winning artist stages reminiscences of the once prevailing DIY culture from his homeland, developed in his childhood, in his latest personal work, ‘The Appleseed Necklace’. Inspired by people’s ingenuity, resourcefulness and mechanical skills in an environment of constant scarcity, he discovered a certain beauty in it and recreates everyday objects from his homeland in order to make visible to the viewer how this post-Soviet society functions today.



AdeY, Portrait Sweden, 2016, © Artist

The former dancer and choreographer **AdeY** employs the body as a means to express moments of intimacy, societal oppression, isolation, fear and depression. In his staged photographs, the Swedish-British artist moves between photography and performance. AdeY's works are politically motivated and explore how society defines who we are and how we are perceived. People's right to be different drives this artist's images. They visually embody our vulnerability, our aloneness and our strengths in a humourful and experimental way.



Andy Kassier, just swinging, 2019, © Artist





**Andy Kassier** shines a sarcastic and ironic light on the concepts of success, wealth and self-aggrandizement in the internet and especially on social media sites. For example, he poses with expensive cars in front of luxurious American villas or stages himself as a dandy in a swimming pool to simulate a jet-set life that doesn't actually exist. He is most well-known for his continuing performance of 'success is just a smile away,' which he has been running on Instagram since 2013.

## **HOME SWEET HOME**

**Sept. 12 to Nov. 15, 2020**

**An exhibition in public space and also on view at Konsum Mathildenhöhe**

Participating artists: **AdeY** (UK), **Anna und Bernhard Blume** (Germany), **Ren Hang** (China), **Andy Kassier** (Germany), **Pixy Liao** (China), **Alexej Shlyk** (Belarus), **Iiu Susiraja** (Finland), **Erwin Wurm** (Austria).

The exhibition curator is Julia Reichelt, Director of Kunstforum der TU Darmstadt. The exhibition will take place in public city spaces and at the Konsum Mathildenhöhe, Pützerstr. 6, 64289 Darmstadt.

The Frankfurt RheinMain Endowment Fund supports the festival as one of three triennials in the Rhein-Main region. This sponsorship allows the endowment fund to underline the significance of contemporary photography for the region.



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