

**KATJA AUFLEGER. SHOW**

03.12.2015–28.01.2016

We are very pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Katja Aufleger in the Drawing Room. For the exhibition Show, the Hamburg-based artist has created a series of more than 100 variations of an oversized necklace and other accessories, which sport the word EGO in different lettering and materials, in place of the pendant. For the opening, Aufleger has staged a “fashion show”, in which two EGOs will be presented together as a performative duo. In her oeuvre to date, which includes installations, video works, objects and drawings, Aufleger has experimented with different methods and forms of representation, which combine conceptual and aesthetic qualities with subtle humour in order to explore (social) transformation processes.

The exhibition Show presents Aufleger's most recent work series EGO, which annexes the Drawing Room in a continuous performative exchange process. The group of works EGO consists of nine different basic principles: six necklaces, a baseball cap, a tie and a knuckle duster, which sport the lettering EGO, vaguely reminiscent of brand names, in different shapes, sizes and materials, (for example glass, beads, plastic, brass and ceramic). These iridescent miniature sculptures that oscillate between fashion jewellery or accessories and wall objects are articulated in a range of neon colours, dominated by pink, orange, rose, red and yellow, like a unique vocabulary.

Aufleger's EGO necklaces trigger associations with the bling-bling style found in hip-hop culture, where the "insignia" of our capitalist society such as the dollar sign or lettering such as "swag", made of cut diamond, are used to demonstrate the self-confidence, (black) identity and newly-gained financial potency of the hip-hoppers. Hence the quantity and diversity of Aufleger's EGO works illustrate the atavistic drive of people to use striking insignia or accessories to define their affiliation to a certain group, whether it be hip-hoppers, baseballers, businessmen, youth gangs or fashion victims.



*Drawing Room  
Hofweg 6  
22085 Hamburg*

*Telefon: 0049 40 55 89 57 24  
contact@drawingroom-hamburg.de  
www.drawingroom-hamburg.de*

True to the motto "Fake it till you make" it, Aufleger's EGOs make reference above all to the increasing trend towards self-marketing in our postmodern society, which allows, but also demands that individuals transform themselves into a brand and constantly promote themselves. A prime example for this current social dynamic is the "selfiemanía" and the digital natives of the "young Internet", with its under-20s who have absorbed the principle of Paris Hilton and vie for attention for their digital self on Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook and YouTube.

Finally, the artist also humorously explores her own profession, because in the world of art – from Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael to Picasso, Bacon or Baselitz – the artist ego and the cult of the genius have always been nurtured. Striving to gain recognition is an anthropological perpetuation. However, the ego is a double-edged sword: on the one hand it appears to be healthy and stimulating, while on the other hand it is pathological. This is what happens when the craving for recognition turns into a power trip and feeds on a feeling of inferiority, according to the Austrian psychoanalyst Alfred Adler (\*1870 Wien – †1937 Aberdeen). Although the art scene likes to present itself as being cultivated, here the craving for recognition is truly rife—in a sometimes more, sometimes less healthy form. The more expensive and recognisable an artwork, the better, because this wins the owner more esteem. "In today's art market", says media theorist Boris Groys, "art presents itself first and foremost as a work and no longer as a statement. Surfaces and easily recognisable brand names are of more interest than the content they convey."



With her EGO necklaces, which can be read in complex different ways, Katja Aufleger has developed a series of works which not only critically examines today's "EGO" society but also deals with themes from current art discourse such as the exploration of the relationship between the "hip" surface and the deeper message of the work, negotiating between statement and content.

Katja Aufleger (born 1983 in Oldenburg, lives and works in Hamburg), studied at the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg (University of Fine Arts Hamburg) under Andreas Slominski, Matt Mullican and Michael Diers. In 2013 she received the Berenberg Prize für junge Kunst as well as the Karl H. Ditze prize for the best diploma work (BANG!) among the masters works presented. In 2014, Aufleger was awarded with the Förderpreis der Kulturstiftung der Öffentlichen Versicherungen Oldenburg and the Hamburger Arbeitsstipendium. In 2015 she received the Zurich scholarship, awarded by the Ministry of Culture of the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg

Solo and group exhibitions: **2015** Kunstverein in Hamburg (S), 6th international art Biennale Peking (G), Stampa Gallery, Basel (G), **2014** Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg (S), Stadtmuseum Oldenburg (S), Gallery ph-projects, Berlin (S), Drawing Room, Hamburg (G), **2013** Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht (G), Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (G), **2012** Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven (G), 2025 Kunst und Kultur e.V., Hamburg

### ***KATJA AUFLEGER. SHOW***

Opening: Wednesday, 2 December 2015 from 7–9pm in the artist's presence.

Introductory speech by Bettina Steinbrügge (Director of Kunstverein in Hamburg).

Duration: 3 December 2015–28 January 2016

For further information and image material please write to [contact@drawingroom-hamburg.de](mailto:contact@drawingroom-hamburg.de)

Opening hours: Tuesday to Thursday 12–7pm and by appointment

Translation: Gillian Morris, Berlin

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