

Sabine Pigalle

New Economy

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Sabine Pigalle's artistic approach belongs to the so-called post-photography movement. The appropriation and manipulation of found images as well as staging photographic moments is hallmarking a new photographic practice under the impact of a digital culture. Pigalle's works are interweaving painting with photography, ancient with contemporary art as well as the figurative with the abstract. They are "artistic embroideries." (Sabine Pigalle)

After her studies in Modern Literature at the Sorbonne University in Paris, Pigalle was working for four years at Helmut Newton's studio focussing on fashion photography. Her own personal artistic research concentrates on the reinterpretation of myths, (art) history, forms of representation and religion.

During the first French lockdown the artist started to work on small groups of altered found images as part of her "My Corona Diary" series. With these sophisticated pieces of subtle irony the current climate of insecurity and measurements is caught by mixing historic material with contemporary topics.

For her New Economy group of works Pigalle is using images of historic and contemporary coins. It exist in two versions: photographic lambda prints and stamp sheets. In addition there are 15 unique pieces using historic envelopes of the Ministère des Finances (Ministry of Finance) which are franked with one of her stamps. The unifying element in these politically driven works is the mask protecting leaders, economies and their societies nevertheless. Through the mask, in this context seen as a symbol of the „threat for trade“, the fragile global economic alliances between the states become unmasked. A global pandemic with several states periodically locked down causes a disruption in delivery chains, a shift in demands, a lack of tourists and distorted markets. As for the art market this shift, generated through cancelled live auctions, gallery shows and art fairs, it propels a lot of artists towards a „new economy“. There is a phenomenon

of a digital alternative art market where a solid base of new collectors is buying art directly from the artist through the internet.

There are by now many websites originated from this current crisis. For example supportyourlocalartist.ch which was founded by an artists' collective focusing on the active scene rooted in the eastern part of Switzerland. Or Zurich based StudioK3.ch founded by the artist Clare Goodwin and the art historian Sandi Paucic. But no other supporting platform was so successfully created than a simple hashtag on Instagram called #artistsupportpledge which has up to date more than 500 000 entries and a minimum of 60 0000 followers. It was founded by the British artist Matthew Burrow as - „a survival mechanism for colleagues impoverished by lockdown.“¹ The New York Times cites estimates of millions of dollars in sales that have been generated through this platform.² For Sabine Pigalle it meant to reach a new, vast and steady audience waiting for her to post a newly created work - in addition to her current museum and gallery exhibitions. Each piece of the „My Corona Diary“ series can be seen as playful reaction to the daily news working their way through the „Melancovide“ (Sabine Pigalle). Humor is the politeness of despair.

The digital distribution of Pigalle's photographic material works perfectly bold on the computer but no live sensation can be replaced by a digital experience. The works are meant to be seen in a spatial context longing for an in-person encounter. This is why to risk the opening of an exhibition in times of a global cultural shut down. But the sensation of seeing art in real life has become exclusive for now and accessible most of the times by appointment only. Go seeing art has paused being a social gathering, but marks the return to an experience to help sharpen your sensitivity of the mind, body and soul. Or in other words try to hide your bitcoins under the mattress and to go full on Stendhal in front of your computer. It simply doesn't work this way.

¹Scott Reyburn, All ears: why collectors can't get enough of industry hype right now, in: The Art Newspaper, November 23rd, 2020

² Scott Reyburn, A Pledge to Help Artists Becomes a Lucrative Lifeline, in: The New York Times, November 12th, 2020