

RUTH MAY | ALICE PERAGINE *Application Operations*

curated by Michaela Melián

July 7 – August 19, 2017

The Barbara Gross Galerie will be showing works by the Hamburg-based artists Ruth May and Alice Peragine, who are exhibiting here for the first time together. Aside from their own artistic practices, each of the two artists is independently involved with diverse groups of artists collectively seeking out intensive explorations that transcend the boundaries of the various artistic disciplines. Both are interested in costumes, uniforms, ritualistic presentations, and fashion. In very different ways they shift the body as a projection surface to the center of their works.

Ruth May derives the elements for her images from various cultural contexts, uniting them in a multi-layered process to form new kinds of hybrid object-images. Many of her pictures are based on figurative paintings by Old Masters—embodiments of secular or religious power. Here, she is particularly interested in robes or armor and the ways that they are presented within the two-dimensional space of the image. In May's drawings the human body always appears enveloped in a shell; surfaces refer to the figures' invisible interiors. In order to achieve a subtle combination of form and content, drawings that are first executed in ink or watercolors are scanned multiple times, processed on the computer, printed on different kinds of materials, and then reprocessed and recombined. The printed fabric refers both to the skin as the shell of the body, with its wrinkles, scars, and tattoos, as well as to the enveloped, absent body with its arrangement of folds. Thus, already possessing dimension, the woven textile itself becomes the medium for the rendering.

In her videos, performances, and installations Alice Peragine presents the human body as it goes through everyday motions in space. At the same time the body represents the self-image, while it also mirrors the expectations and demands of the environment. It's always about the delicate line between trivial, mechanical routines and their inherent potential for disturbances. Her works make use of physical poses and choreography as starting points, recalling military parades or security inspections on the one hand, and the elegance of catwalks and fashion shows on the other. The uniforms, clothing, and utensils used by the actors in Peragine's performances turn up in a modular presentation in the exhibition space. Peragine's themes are institutionalized power relations, inscriptions of structural violence upon the body, and the negotiable definition and boundaries of public and private space.

Michaela Melián

Ruth May (* 1974) lives and works in Hamburg. Studied at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HFBK). Member of the Akademie Isotrop and the artists' group School of Zuversicht. Her works have been seen at the Freitagssalon Hamburg (2016), Kunsthau Hamburg (2014), the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn (2013), Kunstverein Hamburg (2012), KUB Arena Kunsthau, Bregenz (2011), Kunsthalle Lingen, Lingen (2010), and the Westfälischer Kunstverein Münster (2009), among other places.

Alice Peragine (* 1986) lives and works in Hamburg. Studied at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HFBK). Co-founder of PLATEAU, a web-based platform for performing arts in Hamburg, and member of the artists' collective Corporation of People's Situations (COPS). Her works have been seen at the New Museum St. Petersburg (2017), Kunstverein Hildesheim (2017), Galerie Conradi (2016), Stadtkuratorin Hamburg (2016), SixtyEight Art Institute, Copenhagen (2016), Kunsthau Hamburg (2016), Kunstverein Hamburg (2015), Poolhaus Blankenese, and at the Künstlerhäuser Worspswede (2014), among other places.