

Press release

## ***Life = Work***

### **A homage to Marcia Hafif**

02/02–03/30 2019

It is a common fallacy to believe that an artist's life inevitably reflects itself in their work and vice versa. There are cases, however, where life and work are indeed so intrinsically connected that they inform and stimulate each other. Marcia Hafif is such a case. When she passed away at the age of 88 in March 2018 she left behind what one could call the "work of a lifetime" in every sense. Over the course of more than 50 years Hafif explored the possibilities and limitations inherent in the medium of painting; but in her drawings, photos, videos, and texts, too, she expressed an attitude of confidence and consistency that is rare among artists and to which she remained true throughout her whole professional life.

In memory of this extraordinary artist and her work, Galerie Michael Sturm – representing her for many years now – will place Marcia Hafif in the center of its upcoming group show *Life = Work* with artworks from various stages of her creative development. We believe it to be in her sense, however, to not put her on a solitary pedestal but to surround her with works by a younger generation of artists, seeing how much she had always enjoyed the exchange and engaged with those who would come after her. From our wide range of artists we therefore chose works that show how life can inscribe itself into a work and vice versa to accompany hers.

What Marcia Hafif called "The Inventory" are the results of her life-long endeavors to understand and record the materials and methods of art. This inventory comprises entire series of paintings and drawings as a procedural approach to art that is both conceptual and highly personal. For her monochrome or, as she used to call them, "one-color" paintings were not intended as a mere means to achieve some disinterested "radical painting" but also as a carrier of personal and personalized incidents. Quite often Hafif's works carry the names of places to which they refer and which she had visited, or, like her drawing series from the 1970s, specify the exact date, time and how long it took her to make them. For her photo and video project "Letters to J-C" she recorded her walks through the neighborhoods of SoHo, Tribeca and downtown Manhattan.

This approach offers a connection, both formal and with regard to content, to another artist from the US, Danica Phelps. Her drawings, although formally abstract, can be read as some kind of diary, by which Phelps reflects upon her life as an artist and mother in New York City. Their color-coded system of lines and bars represents her private economic situation, where each element has a monetary equivalent that is non-negotiable. But at the same time it describes the relationship between art and life by way of debit and credit – a way that is both prosaically honest and poetic.

Dorothea Schulz' *Fastzeichnungen* (Almostdrawings) are also diary-like in nature. Casual in appearance and done as if in passing, they relate the personal life of this Berlin artist in both form and nature – inner monologs and snippets of phone conversations on candy wrappings and other materials that were within reach when they emerged.

Kevin Simón Mancera from Colombia transforms his observations and personal experience into images with text, whereby the text usually prompts a very pointed reading of the image and creates a narrative situation that is both caustic as it is surreal – but also pretty close to life.

Kevin Clarke's DNA-portraits, on the other hand, tell a different story of life, or what we believe to know about it. Already in 1988, he donated his blood to the California-based *Applied Biosystems* and received the sequence of his genetic code in return, which then appeared in his first "self-portrait" from the same year. This was then followed by portraits of John Cage and Jeff Koons, Nam June Paik, Merce Cunningham, and James D. Watson, the discoverer of the double helix structure of the DNA

molecule. In all of them the genetic “identities” of their “sitters” serve as subtexts to images that represent their subject by way of artistic associations.

*same place – same time*, a video installation by Filderbahnfreundenmöhringen FFM, confronts the life of a teenager with that of the head of a company. Emma is the teenager and daughter of FFM artists Micheline Kober und Daniel Mijic, while the company boss is the CEO of Karatbars International and their neighbor. Two videos are placed opposite each other and separated by a picket fence. One shows the irresistible CEO’s “spirit” as it was taken from a corporate video, while the other shows Emma’s “teen spirit” and is modeled after the first. Two parallel worlds are depicted, the life and narrative of two people who, although neighbors, have nothing in common with each other.

The opening reception will be on Friday, 1 February, from 7 to 9pm

For more information please visit [www.galerie-sturm.de](http://www.galerie-sturm.de)