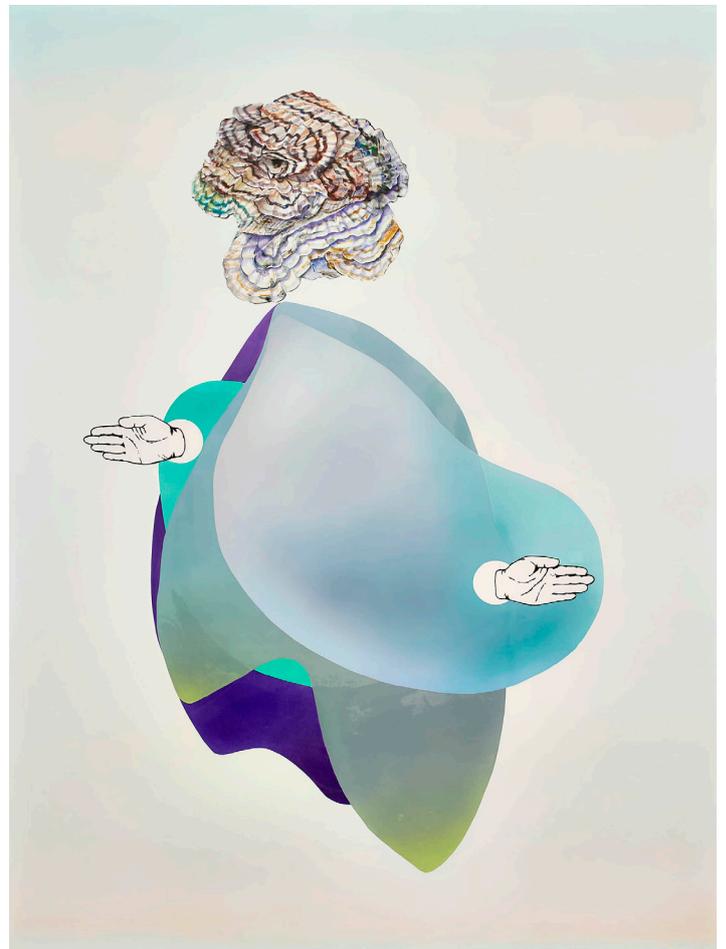


Benedikt Hipp

BODY UPGRADES

3/16 – 4/21/18

The body is a pivotal and recurring theme in Benedikt Hipp's oeuvre. In his paintings and three-dimensional pieces, the artist engages with the weighing of body and mind, aesthetics and ethics, as well as the political dimension of the individual. He questions concepts and notions of individuality and identity that are increasingly turning into controllable and interchangeable parameters in the age of *self-design*. The relation to the iconographic power of objects, philosophical approaches and phenomena of the times play a central role alongside the individual in Benedikt Hipp's work.



Neonatal refractions No 31, 2018

oil and varnish on MDF
188 × 139 cm

BODY UPGRADES initially sounds like the name of a workout studio for electrical muscle stimulation (EMS). While in former times the body was understood as a kind of prison of the soul that could only be assessed and judged by God, “the soul [nowadays] became the sum of relationships into which the human body in the world entered.” (Boris Groys).

Shaping one's body and appearance has therefore outstripped the forming of the soul. However, “BODY UPGRADES“ could also be read as the possibility of reevaluating body and mind in a way that counters their traditional understanding.

In Benedikt Hipp's early paintings, such as Ein Körper ist schon mal etwas (2007) or Leihaus (2007), the figures, bodies, fragments, or organs were tangled with forms and architectural elements, defining the surrounding space to be inhabited through and with them. The original meaning of the *cultic* (derived from *colere*, *cultus*), in the sense of tending and cultivating/inhabiting a place, is the conceptual basis of Hipp's work.

This place, which earlier appeared more like a stage or clearing, is now dissolved in his new works. In the paintings titled Neonatal refractions (2018), for example, the bodies act in an isometric environment defined only by light and color that reminds one of digital displays.



Neonatal refractions No 30, 2018

oil and varnish on MDF
104 x 76 cm

They resist any kind of physiognomic, gender-related or ethnic classification. The title, “Neonatal refractions”, alludes to a fictive, post-humanistic approach of expanding the physical process of refraction in order to conceptualize new states of being or modes of perception via its changes.

The layered waves of bodies recall sonographic scans, geological strata, seismographic recordings, measurements of data flows and information, or depictions of psychedelic states.

In conceptual terms, “Neonatal refractions” is based on the cultural shift of bodily and mental values in our society.

This is similarly true of his three-dimensional works, for example, the installation The place to meet, the place to pray, the place to kiss and self X-ray exhibited at the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum in Ludwigshafen in 2015. While in this piece the place, the venue and the room displayed a “presence” and interface, the new sound installation PEAR (2018) withdraws almost entirely to the inner realm of the beholder.

On view is an oversize pear that looks like a stone. Via headphones, a meditative voice vacillates between inner voice and outer suggestion. Sounds disturb the proprioception (sense of one’s own body) and along with the voice go through questions of individuality, synchronization and self-optimization. One example is the voice warning: “You are not allowed to pick this fruit,” a cultural-historical allusion to the Garden of Eden and the attendant awareness of the body and its sexuality.

Other objects titled enlarged chip implants (ancient recordings) (2018) ironically represent enlarged, fictive, human microchips implants. Stone faces and casts of votive eyes mounted on foamed aluminum address ancient cultural knowledge and intuitive body awareness that can survive as implanted ancient recordings.

Biographical Note:

Benedikt Hipp’s works are known through numerous internationally noted exhibitions. Currently his works are on view in the exhibition “Blind Faith” at Haus der Kunst Munich. During the last years he has shown institutional solo exhibitions at Wilhelm-Hack-Museum Ludwigshafen, Kunstverein Bielefeld, Kunstpalais Erlangen or Art Basel as well as much regarded group exhibitions at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, CAPC – Musée d’Art Contemporain Bordeaux or Kunstverein Hannover. Benedikt Hipp has been incorporated into the “Lexikon der Gegenwartskunst” in 2010. Comprehensive monographical catalogues were released in occasion of his 2015 solo exhibition at Wilhelm-Hack-Museum at Kerber, in 2013 at DISTANZ for this solo exhibition at Kunstpalais Erlangen and 2009 at argosbooks.

Museum Collections:

Pinakothek der Moderne,
Staatliche Grafische Sammlung, München, DE
The Bar Library of Northern Ireland, IE
Departmental Domain Chamarande, FR
Deutsche Bundesbank Sammlung, Frankfurt a. M., DE
Städtische Sammlung Erlangen, DE
Zeppelin Museum, Friedrichshafen, DE

“PEAR, 2018” in cooperation with
Steiner Stiftung, Munich

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