

Katja Davar
The Pyramid Banker
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In the 17th century, the so-called „tulipomania“ began to spread in the Netherlands. In 1637, an entire house changed hands for three tulip bulbs; shortly afterwards came the crash: there were many who wanted to sell, but nobody interested in buying. This historical retrospect forms the origin of Katja Davar's exhibition *The Pyramid Banker*. From today's perspective, this reality seems rather fictitious while on the other hand pointing out the similarities to the structures of our contemporary economic system. Comparable with the phenomenon of the *New Economy* in the 1990s and other objects currently ventured on in the world of finance, enormous amounts of money were virtually gambled with the optional, notional future worth being decisive. Not simply the fascination for complex economic structures, but also simple methods of speculating such as betting at slot machines constitute the background for Katja Davar's latest animation, drawings and works on canvas with embroidery and spray paint. The series of fan-shaped graphite drawings on the one hand alludes to the systematic filing of the various tulip species and toys with the perfectionism found in traditional Dutch still lives, on the other hand, the up-close perspective leads the depiction into the field of abstraction and opens new possibilities for interpreting its contents. While Katja Davar's earlier works on canvas would integrate technological schematizations of circuit diagrams and information charts, the organic tulip forms now make up the basis from which her new compositions set out. Here, one can rediscover the coded history of the tulip: certain forms go back to the exceedingly valuable species of the Rembrandt tulip, others go back to its successor *T. Tarda*, a hybrid species deliberately generated after the crash of 1637. The graphic coding shatters the respective forms and produces a depiction which is beyond realistic contexts of time and space, similar to unforeseeable mutations occurring in nature. The animation *Sharker* alludes to the system of fruit machines. Whereas in all the other works of Katja Davar the tulips remain abstracted, here the various cultivars can be identified, for example *Semper Augustus*, highly appreciated at the time, or *Parrot* and *Friilly Tulips*. The system of the fruit machine is fascinatingly simple: three identical symbols mean you've won. Once more, the game determines a cultural action steeped in tradition.