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A mirror is a mirror is no rose is a mirror, reflecting and reflecting a rose.

On some of Andrea Flemming's artwork

The mirror provides images, and not just in a material way, reflecting substances, mirror images: Art, literature, and theology are filled with images and stories of and about mirrors: symbols of vanity, of self-conscious and self-contained reflection, of solipsism and narcissism, self-education, self-alienation, and of the loss of the world. A mirror brings whoever shows up in it, to him or herself, and at the same time, alienates him/her, showing him/her without their surroundings, cutting him/her off of the world that partly forms him/her, and confronting him/her – not always to the person's advantage – with him-/herself. Even the God of Nicholas of Cusa, who has created his world as a mirror, is, in the end, being caught up in narcissistic self-absorption. He cannot stay within himself, nor can he lose himself in the richness of what he has produced. He finds and recognizes himself in it. After all, his gaining self-awareness by externalization distinguishes him from the monomaniac self-referring, who do not allow for anything or anyone but themselves to matter, and who cannot tolerate another God beside their own. The mirror works as a medium of identity – bestowing it by reflecting emptiness or wealth.

The mirror's reflection is subject to its design, material, and the way in which it is positioned. In this way the mirror acts creatively itself, as the extended hand of its creator, as his third eye. And the fact that the viewer, in seeing himself watching, perceives what is being caught in it, and what it is surrounded by, he too becomes a creator. He lets himself be reflected and thereby takes part in the creative process of reflecting a temporary picture.

Andrea Flemming's self-portraits take on and deal with alienated aspects and materiality of imaging techniques of past times. The pre-history and the early history of photography, daguerreotype, as well as the camera obscura are brought to mind. Blurs, smears, and scratching marks render the mirror dysfunctional as a daily tool, and at the same time give it the status of a creating object. The mirrors do not show their vis-à-vis clear-cut and identifiable.

The controlled alienation as a strain or sprain emphasizes the aesthetic quality and poetic notion of self-portraits. The reflection turns into an artistic act, that does not reflect reality but in which a reality of the imagination is being generated. The woman in the spoon and on the fitting – this photographic play with self-reflection in the distorting concave and convex shapes of daily objects alludes to Parmigianino's self-portrait of the artist as a young man who steadfastly stares with pristine eyes into a ball that reflects himself, as well as the darkened space around him. The painting offers exactly this: There is the look of the artist, which to himself and the viewer appears distorted in such an accurate way that it becomes a precise reproduction of the deformation. In Flemming's work the scenic concept remains hidden. We can assume an atmosphere of suffering, of something morbid. There are white linen, white sheets, closed eyes, and an open mouth. Given the initial position of the works, their large magnification (160 x 100 cm) hints at oversized miniatures or medallions. In the allusive shaping, too, the artist plays with time, with the past, which is manifested twice: Once formed, and once as the blurred memory of a deceased woman.

“Now/ my reflection shows/ a grey/ face” (Ernst Meister)

Bulges and bumps on the mirror play a creative part during a reflection and its perception. Seeing differently means seeing something different, and Andrea Flemming's mirrors are not trimmed to reflect the one-dimensional representation of what is being caught in them. Their particular shapes provide singularly particular disorders and transcoding. They are reminiscent of the mirror cabinets common on fairs in the past. To those who looked carefully these places must have been more than rooms of amusement and pleasure, interspersed with a pleasant shudder at the variability of their own physical image. Mirror cabinets in which we can see our own formability, as cabinets of wonder: the mirror gives nothing of what he has received back in the same fashion. The mirror modifies and is creative in its own way, in that a special shape, and color, and light directions are being given to it. The room wherein it stands rooted in is, in its material-related interpretation, not the same room as the one in which we move and in which the mirror is standing with us. We as viewers are also the witnesses of the object and of its creative power. “Mutabor” I will be changed, goes the spell in Hauff's Caliph Stork. Images which are being distorted in this way, and whose specific origins nevertheless remain traceable, show the realities of a way of seeing which is based on the realities of their inherent material and of the complex adaptation of the same. Comparisons can limp, and yet they work: Andrea Flemming's over-dimensional glass-pupils, which remain without lid and sleep, are “born to see/ ordered to watch” (Goethe) in the same way as they are there to be seen and watched. Streaks, cloudiness, and blind spots on the mirror pupil make the physical connection of seeing obvious. Nobody sees everything in the same way – everybody sees everything differently. This holds true for imaginary spaces and it can also be true for the time of seeing. Seeing, too, ages and seems to be, as well as that what can be seen, subjected to a process of ageing. This process brings with it blurs and fades, and lets the visible appear unseen.

“I am./ I am here with flowers./ eyelashes of the sun./ cores/ in the circle of the sun's pupil:/ eyes, /close to my eyes.// Am I no more?” (Ernst Meister)

The early works of spoons and instrumental self-portraits give room to a self whose body-centered production of infirmity and morbidity equates to a seemingly anachronistic mode of display. The pupil-mirrors accentuate the surroundings as constantly changing in reflection. These surroundings have always been changing and they change with the appearance or disappearance of the viewer. The representation of the interior room of a soul as the putting-in-scene of a body is extended by mirroring an interior space in which the viewer is staying, moving or immobile. He is in the picture which the mirror manufactures: a fleeting image that is only real and valid for the moment in which it is being seen.

The third group of works which shall be mentioned here contains aluminum plates and lenses, which play with the inner and the outer world, without reflections. There are surfaces and deep space. They are optical illusions which can be considered graphics or figures. There are planetary models of past or of alien solar systems, and findings from a future not yet begun, which represent the extinct or that which is yet to come. Configurations of masses of land and water become visible, of continents and of oceans, of worlds that are no longer or not yet inhabited, discarded attempts or attempts in a trial stage. An imaginary cosmos is added, in which the imaginary self of the early reflections and the reflected viewer seem to disappear. An abstract space becomes visible below the surface, graspable through the openings created by lights. It is a room of possibilities, not entirely visible, without clear directions as to whether it will be creating something itself or function as a container. The play of the interior and the exterior with light forms a space of expectation. The rejection or

extrusion of image-related connections to the (mirrored) person, however, implies that the making has retreated behind the creation. The artistic design process, a strong response of the humane, is being absorbed by the perfect object. Traces of the making have been *made* invisible.

“There is no maker,/ there is no witness,/ there she is herself,/ nature alone – / and I/ would be lonely/ in her?” (Ernst Meister)

translated by Mimi Kunz 2013