

The Order of Things

Albert Coers, Mia Goyette, Christine Lemke

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“Up until the end of the sixteenth-century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture. It was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them,”¹ asserts Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things*. His book serves as the casual interface for the exhibition *The Order Of Things*. In their installations, Albert Coers, Mia Goyette, and Christine Lemke examine the shifts and interrelationships between various systems of order within language, society, and economic contexts.

How do you describe with a hand gesture something as complex as countries and nations? In *Länderkennzeichen* (2016), **Albert Coers** demonstrates, starting from a sign-language dictionary for the hearing impaired published in East Berlin in 1985, how countries are represented as signs based on ostensibly specific classifications and their cultural characteristics. The countries are arranged alphabetically according to their provenance in a dictionary, an originally arbitrary system of order.

The gestures reference what has become an historical way of seeing, which, in addition to changes in today’s political map, also reveal shifts in identities. *Länderkennzeichen* serves as a kind of tautological table where signs are detached from their origins and evoke new associations beyond their etymology.

In *The Prospect of an End (wärmestabilisiert DVGW DW-8501B00049/...)* (2016), **Mia Goyette** alludes to, among other things, early geological studies and the wide-range of man’s accompanying interventions into specific material states and existing architectures. Referring to what is called “anthropic rock,” these interventions, created by human hands but at the same time seemingly artificial, are queried anew and made visible. The quasi-model, made from a concrete cast, reveals the skeleton of a fictitious structure and a life-size hand made out of cast resin, detached from the body and thus its function, becomes a prosthesis integrated into the construction as an instrument. The PVC-coated aluminum tubing serves, not least, as the connecting element between fictive and real architecture.

Leben ist Leben (2013) by **Christine Lemke** is a film of sequenced images defined by its interrelationship of image and soundtrack. The images consist of film stills from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by Milos Forman (1975). These are combined with the voice-over, generating a new narrative space: the suggestive “plot” takes up the theme of containment within a psychiatric institution, but turns this into the tale of an insurrection in a present-day retirement home. Image and text are merged, intertwining and contrasting with one another. The discursively charged—iconic—source material is shifted into a new context through Lemke’s thematic reworking, poetic transformation, and updating of the film’s historical and sociocultural narratives.

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (Vintage: New York, 1973) p. 17