

REVIEWS

movement flashing along synapses. The same kind of progress, suggestive of thought and ideation, moves across *Spaghetti Love*, 2014, composed of hundreds of drawings, doodles, and photographs nailed to the wall. This is no random collection of ephemera, however. Across this imagery, we find the same shapes (the multinuclear orb, the atomic tangle, the mushroom, the grid) that Segre deploys in her sculptures, here colliding and mutating, collating and dispersing, with cells turning to owl eyes to tree rings to fingerprints. In this show, the artist returned to the same forms and iconography again and again, via circuitous routes and with an obsessive determination. FROM MY HEAD TO YOURS, reads a note scribbled at the end of a to-do list.

—Emily Hall

Anna-Sophie Berger

JTT

Ruins can be preserved, or they can offer debris from which to build. It is with such wreckage that Vienna-based artist and fashion designer Anna-Sophie Berger creates work: Her practice is not fashion or art but a bricolage built upon collisions of the two—a product of a time when these industries seek to establish market-driven “synergy” but remain discrete. Bringing fashion and art together may be problematic, but Berger’s vision is guided by unique optimism: She is less interested in critique than in infiltration, in finding ways in which to invade and occupy her two adopted disciplines, creating objects that are neither one nor the other.

Berger studied fashion design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, and her New York solo debut featured works derived from FASHION IS FAST, a collection she produced for her thesis project there. Of the many accessories included in the line are black tights silk-screened with phrases from the NATO phonetic alphabet: F – FOXTROT; K – KILO; E – ECHO; J – JULIETT; I – INDIA. For this exhibition, she placed ten pairs on a white pedestal and cut off their feet and tops; as such, the tights are no longer functional clothing items but pure signs (though they could probably be worn as leg warmers of sorts). Abutting the pedestal is a pair of leather loafers, also designed for the line, with digits 4 and 0—the shoe size being forty—printed over their respective tops. In other articles from her collection (not on display here), Berger similarly incorporated sizes as well as lines and arrows (denoting hemlines and inseams). If a clothing item is created to broadcast an allusive complex of cultural and aesthetic codes that we refer to as a “brand” or a “style,” here those significations yield to the comically blunt, mechanical language of garment production.

Also on view in the exhibition were eight prints derived from four photographs depicting pieces from Berger’s line: closely cropped shots of a red shirt, the waistband of a yellow skirt, a green top, and a blue crew-neck. First, Berger digitally stretched and compressed the four photographs to conform to dimensions derived from various digital formats—the Facebook banner, the Instagram image, the screens of the iPhone and

iPad. Next, she printed the modified images twice, first on rigid Dibond, then on a supple silk scarf. Together, the eight “prints” demonstrate the ease with which images migrate through formats, mediums, and disciplines. Such transmissions, however, are hardly seamless: Comparing the way in which the same print appears on different media, Dibond and silk, one notices the levels of color saturation have subtly shifted, a difference that points to what is lost and what is retained in the act of appropriation. This interest in the glitches of transmission extends to the artist’s movement back and forth between art and fashion. She is less interested in fabricating new patterns than in exploring the productive, even subversive awkwardness of tailoring old things for new contexts.

On the night of her opening, four of Berger’s friends donned her clothing and took part in a performance. Each stood next to the photograph of her respective outfit as Berger issued commands: “Spread your legs.” “Sit down.” “Touch your toes.” Their movements were choppy, unique to each performer. As a whole, the performance crystallized Berger’s ebullient, if happily critical, practice: The most potent acts of disruption come not from rejection but from customization.

—Allese Thomson

Heidi Bucher

SWISS INSTITUTE

At first, it is almost impossible to understand Heidi Bucher’s work as anything other than an utter dematerialization of the buildings that provided the literal framework for her practice. The Swiss artist was best known during her lifetime (1926–1993) for the pieces she described as “skinnings” (*Häutungs*): sheer, milky casts of walls, floors, and ceilings, made from latex and gauze or other fabric. *Untitled (Herrenzimmer)*, for example, the undated work likely made between 1977 and 1979 that is the focal point of Bucher’s current show at the Swiss Institute, is a cast of the study of her parents’ house, presented as three panels (the room’s fourth wall, originally also part of the piece, has been lost) suspended from the ceiling in a U-shaped configuration and hovering a few inches from the floor. These wispy surfaces confront the viewer with a bewildering lightness. While the house’s solid, bourgeois nineteenth-century construction—from the dignified patterning of the wood paneling covering the walls to the elegant decorative moldings running along the edge of the floor—is clearly recognizable, faithfully recorded by her casting process, it acquires a kind of sublime delicacy when rendered in translucent latex. Walking, no matter how gingerly, through the open door incorporated in one of the panels causes the entire sheet, some six by twelve feet, to sway and ripple, as if the artwork is too fragile to exist in the same physical world as a moving body.

That Bucher herself was fascinated by the ethereality of her skins is clearly demonstrated by the films on view in the Swiss Institute’s lower-level gallery. Among these, *Räume sind Hüllen, sind Häute* (Rooms Are Surroundings, Are Skins), 1981, emphasizes the moment of separation between building and skin. As the pliant surfaces are peeled off of and carried out of their building-mold, in this case her grandparents’ house in Winterthur, the viewer’s reflexive assumptions about how architecture is supposed to behave are shattered as recognizably familiar surfaces undergo mind-bending topological inversions: The patterned tile floor of a hallway is pulled out through the front door; a bedroom wall is rolled up and passed through a window. Here, the artist seems first to have turned architecture inside out and then to have left it far behind.

And yet the crux of Bucher’s work is just how much of architecture’s essential nature she retained. The cast, after all, is a trace, an indexical

View of “Anna-Sophie Berger,” 2014. Left: Hardax, 2014. Right: hard (blue), 2014.

