

raw and radical women in the arts podcast



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A conversation with Viktoria Binschtok On Display Podcast

season 2 episode 5
Jan 28 2020

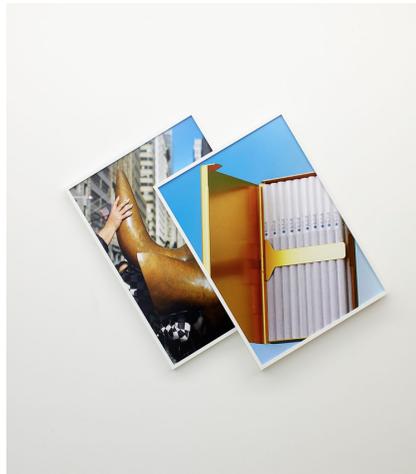
Artist Viktoria Binschtok shares her artistic process and thoughts on how we communicate through images in a digital age.

About our guest

Viktoria Binschtok is a contemporary conceptual artist working with original and found images, creating collections that are abstractions on our visual culture. She earned her Meisterschüler Studium in Photography and Media Arts from the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, and lives and works in Berlin.

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Golden Horn : Golden Case, 2017



Marriage is a Lie : Fried Chicken Cluster, C/O Berlin, 2015



Photographer and conceptual artist Viktoria Binschtok joins us today to talk about her artistic inspirations and process, her experience participating in an artist-run gallery, and the impact of family life on her work.

Viktoria studied Photography and Media Arts at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, ultimately earning a Meisterschüler Studium. As a student, she found herself drawn to imagery in our society, how it is used to communicate, and how it changes with cultural evolution.

This exploration became the basis of her creative process. She starts with one of her original images, uploading it to the internet and using a search algorithm to find other visually or thematically similar images. She often recreates these found images in her own studio, adding unexpected elements or color, before combining all the images into collections or “clusters.”

“I just get the idea, and then I go back into my studio and I restage these found images, and then I combine my image and the found image,” she says. “You don’t really have a story behind one certain image, it’s more about visual data, it’s an abstraction on this visual culture.”

Using imagery as a lens

Viktoria’s deep interest in using imagery to translate and understand our experiences is rooted in her childhood. At 6, she moved from Moscow, Russia to a small town outside of Hanover, Germany. Although she quickly learned to speak German, images were her gateway to understanding.

“It has an impact,” she says. “I just realized a couple of years ago that all those circumstances of my early experience, living in a world where I didn’t ... understand the language ... I was lost in images, and of course the Western world was full of ads and commercial images.”

Although viewers often ask her if there’s a story behind the images she combines, she says the pieces themselves are simply a collaboration between herself and the algorithm she uses to find related images.

“The storytelling, I think, is something very human ... so we see images and we immediately have some connections to experiences we made, or we try to find a story ... behind it,” she says. “I think there’s quite a disappointment because people want to hear a story, but this is something ... more abstract, about culture than a certain image.”

An unusual career trajectory

In the early days of her career, Viktoria took the unusual step of collaborating with 20 other artists to hire a gallerist and launch an artist-owned gallery to promote their work. This allowed her to focus on creating art, rather than trying to sell art, which is a challenge for every artist.

“Artists should focus on working on art,” she says. “There’s so many things gallerists do better than artists. I never sold a piece myself without a gallerist in between.” Having time and space to work is important to her. Although motherhood hasn’t impacted her work thematically, having children has forced her to focus more during her working hours.

“I have this timeframe ... 8 to 5 or something, and I try to do as much as I can,” she says. “Before, it was really open ended, and yeah I could sleep in my studio... but I didn’t make more work, I think.”

Although she doesn’t have specific advice for other women artists, she feels like it should be “natural” for artists to do what they do.

“Always be aware and always ... take your piece of the cake I would say,” she says. “Don’t even hesitate to be part of the party.”

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“The storytelling, I think, is something very human ... so we see images and we immediately have some connections to experiences we made, or we try to find a story ... behind it”

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