



# Sylvia Schedelbauer

*Collected Works 2004–2018*

Sylvia Schedelbauer produces experimental moving image works, that range from auto-biographical documentaries to visceral explorations of imagined scenarios. This exhibition is a large-scale immersive passage through Schedelbauer's entire oeuvre, bringing us from her most recent work *Wishing Well*, 2018 right back to her first work *Memories*, 2004.

Over the years Schedelbauer has developed her own unique cinematic structural language to interrogate themes such as cultural dislocation, what it means to be transnational, the slippery shifts between fiction and reality, and memory, as an unreliable but compelling insight into history. She uses narrative tools like dream logic, biography, allegorical collage, free association and storytelling to create highly engaging sensory experiences, that sometimes take years to complete. Her flickering filmic works stretch and accelerate the potential of found footage. Often working with source material such as orphan films – educational, industrial, amateur footage, home movies and newsreels – from archives or personal collections, Schedelbauer manipulates imagery to transform it into something totally new. In this way she inhabits existing material, bending it to her will to form an original narrative of her own (re)construction, creating new versions of a story every time.

Schedelbauer's work is regularly screened at film festivals internationally. This exhibition marks her first solo show in a gallery context, and the first comprehensive exhibition of her complete works.

**Sylvia Schedelbauer** was born in Tokyo, and moved to Berlin in 1993 where she has been based since. She studied at the University of Arts Berlin (with Katharina Sieverding). Her films negotiate the space between broader historical narratives and personal, psychological realms mainly through poetic manipulations of found and archival footage. Selected screenings include Berlinale, Toronto International Film Festival, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, London Film Festival, New York Film Festival, Robert Flaherty International Film Seminar and Stan Brakhage Symposium. Awards include the VG Bild-Kunst Award, the German Film Critics' Award and the Gus Van Sant Award for Best Experimental Film.

## List of Works

1

*Wishing Well*, 2018

Duration: 13 min.

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Music: Jeff Surak

Synopsis: Gushing colors. A time disjointed, yet synchronous. A transcendent turn, a quest for agency, a reunion with currents of the forest.

2

*Sea of Vapors*, 2014

Duration: 15 min.

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Music: Jeff Surak

Director of Photography: Cyrus Tabar

Cast: Linda Scobie

Synopsis: A cascade of images cut frame by frame flow into an allegory of the lunar cycle.

3

*Sounding Glass*, 2011

Duration: 10 min.

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Music: Thomas Carnacki

Synopsis: A man in a forest is subject to a flood of impressions; rhythmic waves of images and sounds give form to his introspection.

4

*way fare*, 2009

Duration: 7 min.

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Synopsis: A lyrical layering of found images and constructed soundscapes generate a psychogram beneath shifting residues of rootlessness; simultaneous spaces in, and out, of time.

5

*False Friends*, 2007

Duration: 5 min

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Synopsis: A montage of mid-century found footage: mysterious strands are obsessively braided to create a poetic reflection about an anxious interplay of memory and projection.

6

*Remote Intimacy*, 2007

Duration: 15min

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Voice over: Mona Deghan, Setsu Tamura-Schedelbauer

Synopsis: Stream of consciousness with fictitious and found stories and a personal reference.

7

*Memories*, 2004

Duration: 19min

Picture / sound montage: Sylvia Schedelbauer

Synopsis: An attempt to construct a personal history by the artist.

# nownownow – On the works of Sylvia Schedelbauer

Text by Alice Butler

For the most part, cinema goes to great lengths to conceal or distract from its piecemeal assembly. The labour invested in the fractured production of a single frame is often obscured by the polished outcome of the flat image. Fragmentation is an inexorable component of the medium however, not always something to overcome but arguably one of its great attributes, offering the possibility for infinite reconfiguration. This feature affords the filmmaker the unique albeit daunting opportunity to create something that closely resembles the elusive qualities of a thought process, with all the mysterious pathways, preoccupations and associations that this entails. It also allows for a more archaeological approach, one in which standard sequences give way to transparent images that peel back one by one to reveal what's 'around, or behind a picture' rather than what comes next.<sup>1</sup>

Sylvia Schedelbauer's films are composed predominantly of pre-existing footage, material that she draws from educational, industrial and amateur collections that includes home movies, travelogues and newsreels. The un-captioned segments, although extensive, are characterized by what art historian Charles Merewether describes as the 'counter-monumental' – no landmarks, iconic events or familiar historical figures appear.<sup>2</sup> In *Sounding Glass* (2011) for example we see snapshots of a forest, a murmur, explosions on a battlefield, a Japanese woman carrying a baby on her back, sun bursting through the clouds. In their original contexts, these shots were cut-aways, fillers, accidents even, expressions of what is typically overlooked but presented together here, they amass as a portrait of a splintered collective psyche. *Sounding Glass* features a protagonist though, a man who stares intently into the lens of the camera at the film's outset and about whom all the film's questions of cultural dislocation caused by global conflict relate.

The forthright protagonist in *Sounding Glass* is somewhat of an anomaly in Schedelbauer's filmography – elsewhere figures mostly shield their faces from view, unusually wary of being captured by the camera. They are solitary and nomadic, conveying a painful sense of alterity reminiscent of the peripatetic characters that populate the books of German writer W.G. Sebald, perhaps most notably in 'Austerlitz' (2001), a novel whose eponymous Jewish hero is born in the advent of the Second World War and sent as part of the Kindertransport to London. Adopted and raised by Welsh parents, who conceal his identity from him, Jacques Austerlitz subsequently becomes intent on uncovering his past. The conspicuous feeling of rootlessness evoked in Schedelbauer's *way fare* (2009) resonates with the novel but so too does the story that emerges in *Memories* (2004), the artist's first film in which she uses a collection of her German father's

photographs to try and unearth the closely guarded secrets of both his and her Japanese mother's early lives in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

*Memories* and Schedelbauer's second film *Remote Intimacy* (2007) are her only works in which voice-over features. From there, her focus is on developing an intensely visual language free from the confines of verbal speech. Soon the black insert appears, most obviously in *False Friends* (2007) giving expression perhaps to previously described gaps in family memory. Initially these dark single frames appear fairly evenly, creating more of a blinking rhythm than they do a sense of disturbance. In the opening section of *Sounding Glass* however, the black frames introduce the 'frenzied inertia' that critical theorist Francis Summers describes in relation to Austrian experimental filmmaker Martin Arnold's *Pièce touchée* (1989), a 16 minute film that stretches out an 18 second extract from a 1950s American B-Movie that he says 'mires the audience in a perpetual present that evokes a "now-now-now"', a sensation of desired apprehension not dissimilar to the experience of absorbing some of Schedelbauer's most recent works.<sup>3</sup>

Introducing a heightened sense of the present is an uncanny facet of Schedelbauer's manipulation of mid-century footage. This masterful act of simultaneity – experiences of present and past co-existing within the same frame – does not only apply here. It is a structural device and conceptual framework fundamental to Schedelbauer's three most recent films. Each of these works are marked by the evocation of divergent tempos for example; the slow pan that occurs in the close-up shot of a human eye in *Sea of Vapors* (2014) is offset by the speed of the flickering image of a forested landscape which is braided through it. This strategy captures the liminal and subliminal features of memory, making as much reference to the unfathomable process of forgetting as it does to the nature of recall. It also creates a powerful vortex for the viewer who is drawn in as the images seem to radiate out from the screen to inhabit the full space of the rooms they occupy. This somatic experience is the mark of any encounter with these films and the all-consuming force of their syncopated luminosity.

Schedelbauer tells of how she adopts the flicker in some cases as a means of facilitating what she would like to do with footage that she finds in a compromised state. The flicker enables her to extend out the duration of a scene for example – it means she can impose her will over the material rather than the other way around. Schedelbauer says however that she is also driven to find ways of making this so-called found material 'speak more', a phrase that reveals a desire to uncover hidden or latent significance in largely discarded footage. This connects strongly to the idea that images which are no longer, or in fact were never, in the public consciousness have particular worth because of what Bruce Conner describes as, 'a philosophical premise that's been around for a long time: if you want to know what's going on in a culture look at the things that everybody takes for granted, and put a lot of emphasis on that rather than what they want to show you.'<sup>4</sup>

It is the act of combining as much as it is the act of selection that distinguishes Schedelbauer's work with found footage though – hybridity is an essential component of what she does, blending two or more pieces of film to create a third, a fourth etc. This spawning of new material is a process of transformation that takes place on screen, each film living out a perpetual becoming, each precipice replacing the last. These shots exaggerate the 'evanescence' of the film image, the quality that places us as viewers under the command of the filmmaker who ultimately decides how long we see each shot and what it will be replaced by.<sup>5</sup> This is a position that Schedelbauer assumes with unparalleled care, time and consideration, ensuring at every turn that the fragments she has unearthed for us always merit a second, much closer look.

**Alice Butler** is a Dublin-based film programmer, curator and co-director of aemi, a platform that supports and exhibits artist & experimental moving image work. Recent solo curatorial ventures include 'The L-Shape', an exhibition of moving image work by Jenny Brady & Sarah Browne at The Dock, Leirim, 'As We May Think' at IFI, Dublin, and 'New Spaces' with VAI Northern Ireland. Butler has written for Sight and Sound, SET Magazine, Paper Visual Art, Enclave Review, VAN, EFS Publications, and CIRCA. She is a regular film reviewer for RTÉ Radio One's Arena. She regularly presents screenings at Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane and she has lectured or participated in panels on the moving image in Ireland at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Project Arts Centre, PLASTIK Festival of Artists' Moving Image, IFI, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Galway Arts Centre, The Dock, University College Dublin and Dublin Institute of Technology.

- 1 Lucy Raven in conversation with Victoria Brooks in relation to her film *The Deccan Trap* (2015) refers to what she calls 'a continuity of desire... to see around, or behind a picture', <http://www.vdrome.org/lucy-raven>,
- 2 Merewether, Charles, Introduction to Merewether, Charles (ed.), *The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art*, Whitechapel, London and the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2006, p. 16.
- 3 Summers, Francis, *(Re)Counting Love: Martin Arnold's Pièce touchée* (2011) <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/transmission/papers/SUMMERS%20Francis.pdf>
- 4 Conner, Bruce, quoted in Zyrd, Michael, 'Found Footage Film as Discursive Metahistory: Craig Baldwin's Tribulation 99' in *The Moving Image*, University of Minnesota Press, Vol 2, No. 2, 2003, p. 40
- 5 Chion, Michel, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, Translated and Edited by Claudia Gorbman, Columbia University Press, 2009, p. 7

15 May 2019

7pm: The Members Library with **Theresa Failand-Nerat**. The artist takes us on an inspiring journey through artistic techniques, various motifs and fascinating cultural insights that she was able to gain during her travels. Her recently published catalogue illustrates the wide range of her practice. Born in Styria, Failand-Nerat studied art history and restoration and works mainly in the fields of sculpture, installation, photography, painting and performance.

17 May 2019

2-6pm: Editing Event and Public Discussion with **Triple Candie**. For this daytime event, Triple Candie (**Shelly Bancroft** and **Peter Nesbett**) will be in conversation with artistic director **Kate Strain** and invited guests to discuss their expansive research project *If Michael Asher*, as well as their current exhibition at Grazer Kunstverein, and the content and compilation process of their forthcoming publication which serves as a catalogue documenting the entire project.

23 May 2019

7pm: Poetry reading by **Myung Mi Kim**, South Korea-born and USA-based poet and author of *Under Flag* (1991), *The Bounty* (1996), *DURA* (1999), *Commons* (2002), organized by **Jennifer A. Reimer**, FWF and American Studies Department, Uni Graz.

Bookings for all of our public programme events can be made by emailing [office@grazerkunstverein.org](mailto:office@grazerkunstverein.org). For updates and further information on our calendar please refer to the Events page of our website: [www.grazerkunstverein.org](http://www.grazerkunstverein.org)

# Public Programme

## 8 March 2019

8pm: Opening of two new exhibitions by **Sylvia Schedebauer** and **Triple Candie**. The Spring Season opening takes place in the frame of CRK+ with additional openings around the city at <rotor> (6pm), Camera Austria (7pm), as well as Grazer Kunstverein (8pm), followed by a celebration at Schauspielhaus as part of International Women's Day (10pm) by *Women\* in Action: the private is political – no sh\*t!*

## 23 March 2019

11am: Panel Discussion in collaboration with Diagonale – Festival of Austrian Film. This event is chaired by **Claudia Sianar** with discursive contributions by **Sylvia Schedebauer**, **Daniel Fitzpatrick**, **Lydia Nsiah** and **Johann Lurtz**. The theme of this event is around the political impact of experimental/innovative cinema today. Brunch will be provided by *Fink's* artist **Fiona Hallinan**.

## 24 April 2019

7pm: Artists' Homes with **Gottfried Pengg-Auheim**. Born in Graz and living here since 2006, Pengg-Auheim did not embark on his artistic career until he had completed his studies in forestry. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and has since worked as a successful painter focusing on landscape, portraiture and still life. He invites us to his studio to dive into his visual worlds. Location: Glacisstraße 33, 8010 Graz.

## 3 May 2019

7pm: Reading performance by **J. Michael Martinez** and **Karen Tei Yamashita** as part of *Forms of Migration: An International Conference on Transnational Literature & Innovative Aesthetics*. Also featuring a special performance, "To A Syrian Prisoner of Conscience," by **Gregory Carlock** and **Stefan Maneval**. This event is organized by **Jennifer A. Reimer**, FWF and American Studies Department, Uni Graz.

## 3/4/5 May 2019

Gallery Days  
The Grazer Kunstverein is delighted to host a reading performance presented by Uni Graz (on Friday 3 May) as well as the ongoing exhibition programme of the Spring Season.

### List of installations

**I. Untitled**  
A list of the names of all the artists the Grazer Kunstverein has ever worked with across exhibition-making, displayed in alphabetical order in vinyl lettering across the front windows of the institution.

**II. Untitled**  
The cutting away of the lower 12 inches of the reception desk revealing feet, wires, cables etc.

**III. Untitled**  
Multiple copies of a book, Raphaël Baroni & Françoise Revez's *Narrative Sequence in Contemporary Narratology* to be read by multiple readers simultaneously in The Members Library.

**IV. Untitled**  
A replacement of a half-wall in the main gallery, that at one time hid the staff's office before the facility was redesigned.

**V. Untitled**  
Two posters of American garbage trucks, photographed in Washington DC during the longest government shutdown in US history.

**VI. Untitled**  
A hanging display of garden chairs. These chairs replace a set of six pink Fermob Luxembourg chairs, previously on loan from neighbouring business chillout area. The verbal loan agreement concerning the original chairs expired and was not renewed.

**VII. Untitled**  
An audio recording of ambient sounds recorded in the Grazer Kunstverein's office, broadcast at low volume.

**VIII. Untitled**  
Two vertical, floor to ceiling incisions in adjacent corners of a gallery wall.

**IX. Untitled**  
A tourist postcard bearing a photographic portrait of Kate Strain, Grazer Kunstverein's Artistic Director.

**X. Untitled**  
An empty flagpole reinserted into an unused mount on the exterior facade.

**XI. Untitled**  
A mobility walker periodically moved to different locations in the Grazer Kunstverein's courtyard.

# Spring at Grazer Kunstverein

## 8 March – 24 May 2019

Sylvia Schedelbauer  
*Collected Works 2004–2018*

Triple Candie  
*The Culmination of Eighteen Months of Speculative Inquiry into the Anaphoric and Cataphoric Plays of a Situationist Aesthete: This Exhibition—which isn't really about Narratology per se—Collects the Unfaithful Simulations, (Re)Articulations, and Interpolations Endeavored by Triple Candie, in Principled Reverence for the Deceased and Beloved American Artist Michael Asher (1943–2012)*

Curated by Kate Strain

Grazer Kunstverein  
Palais Trauttmansdorff  
Burggasse 4  
8010 Graz  
Tel. +43 (0)316 83 41 41  
Fax +43 (0)316 83 41 42

office@grazerkunstverein.org  
www.grazerkunstverein.org

Opening hours:  
Wed–Sun 11am–6pm  
Triple Candie 11am–2:30pm  
Sylvia Schedelbauer 2:30–6pm

Admission to the exhibitions is free  
Guided tours of the exhibitions are available upon request

Grazer Kunstverein is structurally supported by the city of Graz, the Federal Chancellery of Austria Arts and Culture Division, the province of Styria, legero united | con-tempus.eu, and its members. The project with Triple Candie was produced in collaboration with Phileas.



BUNDESKANZLERAMT ÖSTERREICH  
KUNST



legero united  
Initiator of con-tempus.eu

phileas

A Fund for Contemporary Art

# Triple Candie

*The Culmination of Eighteen Months of Speculative Inquiry into the Anaphoric and Cataphoric Plays of a Situationist Aesthete: This Exhibition—which isn't really about Narratology per se—Collects the Unfaithful Simulations, (Re)Articulations, and Interpolations Endeavored by Triple Candie, in Principled Reverence for the Deceased and Beloved American Artist Michael Asher (1943–2012)*

Throughout 2018 and early 2019 Triple Candie (Shelly Bancroft and Peter Nesbett) undertook a multi-layered research project investigating the work and legacy of the legendary American conceptual artist Michael Asher. Asher is well known for creating temporary installations in museum and gallery environments, often foregrounding the various hidden systems and assumptions that make art viewing possible. Triple Candie researched his oeuvre in order to understand and embody his production methodology, and to apply it, in a new and moderately theatrical way, to the specific context of the Grazer Kunstverein.

As part of the research project Triple Candie proposed multiple speculative installations, that were realised in a sequential seasonal rhythm throughout 2018. In practice, these installations were an attempt to resurrect the lost experiential potentialities of the work of an artist like Asher, asking 'is it possible, through the speculative potential of arts practice, to reactivate expired gestures, in new or meaningful ways?' Marking the culmination of this extensive research project, as part of the Spring Season we present a reprise of the first four installations, together with seven additional proposals that were previously unrealised. The exhibition will be documented with a forthcoming catalogue publication, contextualising the entire project.

**Triple Candie** (Shelly Bancroft and Peter Nesbett) is a US-based, avant-garde curatorial production agency that collaborates with museums and contemporary art spaces on exhibitions about art but generally devoid of it. From 2001 to 2010, it had a gallery in Harlem. Since then, it has presented projects in Australia, Europe, and the United States at such venues as Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles, Deste Foundation, Athens, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, and Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City. Surveys of Triple Candie's work have appeared at FRAC Île-de-France/Le Plateau, Paris (2012), and Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts (2017).

