

Kunstraum is pleased to present:

PERFORMING OBJECTS

3-4 June 2017

ISABELLE CORNARO | BENEDICT DREW | ANNA FRANCESCHINI |
REBECCA LENNON | ZOE WILLIAMS
with a talk by Iain Hamilton Grant and Maria Walsh
curated by Caterina Avataneo

Screening night and performance | 3rd June 6 – 9 pm

Anna Franceschini and Zoe Williams in conversation | 4th June 2 pm

Iain Hamilton Grant and Maria Walsh in conversation | 4th June 3 pm

Inspired by Graham Harman's essay *On Vicarious Causation*, *Performing Objects* speculates on the performativity of objects through a selection of videos by Isabelle Cornaro, Benedict Drew, Anna Franceschini, Rebecca Lennon and Zoe Williams, and additionally draws parallels between object-oriented theories and the objectification of the human body.

While the videos offer glimpses of a world beyond the scope of human interrogation, the surrounding space designed by Zoe Williams and the durational choreographed performance by Anna Franceschini suggest a celebration of fetishism/eroticism and a bidirectional contamination of body and object, respectively.

In a context where distinctions between subjects and objects are blurred, each playfully mimicking the other, Art historian Maria Walsh and philosopher Iain Hamilton Grant reflect on pornographic literature and the treatment of flesh, and discuss how, or even if, it is possible to re-contextualize or re-interpret the human body.

Against philosophical traditions that have been unwilling to think about objects beyond their relationship with a (human) subject, Harman draws from writings by, among others, Martin Heidegger and Alfred North Whitehead in order to put forward a seemingly self-evident postulate: everything exists on an equal ontological footing as 'object'. Far from being passive inanimate substances, Harman ascribes infinitely more complex internal structures and relationships to and between entities, painting a strange subterranean world "packed full of ghostly real objects signalling to each other from inscrutable corners".

Each of the selected videos present forms that fuse, melt, re-form, move, fluctuate, disappear and influence one another in rich and evocative visual spectacles, communicating their potential as aesthetic artefacts and illustrating the kind of complex dynamics described by Harman, whereby the human presence is absent, or at the boundary of being superfluous. Such interest in the hidden realm of objects is approached in *Performing Objects* with a view to developing a broader sense of objecthood and a re-theorization of the human body at the same time.