

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, Dez 19, 2023

VALIE EXPORT RETROSPEKTIVE

C/O Berlin presents the exhibition **VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective** from **Jan 27 to May 21, 2024**. The **opening** takes place on **Fri, Jan 26, 2024**, at **20:00** at C/O Berlin in the Amerika Haus at Hardenbergstrasse 22–24, 10623 Berlin.

This exhibition recognizes the complex oeuvre of VALIE EXPORT (b. 1940), one of the twentieth century's most influential media and performance artists in the world, who intrepidly challenged social norms and role models with her media-reflective practice and critical feminist perspective.

Presenting works created between 1966 and 2009, the exhibition provides a comprehensive overview of VALIE EXPORT's career. A filmmaker, performance artist, and media artist who is now celebrated as an icon of feminist art, EXPORT caused a sensation with her actions in public space in the late 1960s. The retrospective covers a wide range of works from her provocative "expanded cinema" actions, symbolic performances, and analytical conceptual photography to multimedia installations and urban interventions. The works reflect the multifaced development of an artist whose works are still topical and serve as important points of reference for sociopolitical investigations today.

The exhibition presents many of EXPORT's pioneering works, including *TAPP und TASTKINO* (*Touch Cinema*, 1968), one of the early "expanded cinema" actions in which the artist strapped a box to her naked chest as a "movie theater" and invited passersby to touch her breasts for a precise length of time, challenging notions of the voyeuristic gaze on the female body. The legendary action *Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit* (*From the Portfolio of Doggedness*, 1968) is also shown, in which EXPORT walked through the center of Vienna with Peter Weibel, her partner at the time, on a leash like a dog to challenge traditional gender issues and analyze human behavior by means of animal comparisons.

VALIE EXPORT's multidisciplinary oeuvre eludes attributions and classifications, transcending the limitations of media and genres. In addition to her own body, her work involves photography, drawings, videos, and installations. One focus of the exhibition is the relevance of photography in the artist's work. Photography occupies a central position, regardless of whether it is treated as a means of documentation, as an experiment, or as an independent work. EXPORT explicitly expresses her analysis of mass media and processes of illustration as feminist criticism to examine the role of women, their social marginalization, and the representation of the female body in a patriarchal society.

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, Dec 19, 2023

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective offers the first comprehensive solo presentation of the artist's complex work to be held in an institutional context in many years. The exhibition is curated by guest curator Walter Moser (ALBERTINA, Vienna) in collaboration with Boaz Levin (C/O Berlin Foundation). It was previously presented at the ALBERTINA Museum in Vienna and at the Fotomuseum Winterthur. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog.

VALIE EXPORT (b. 1940, Austria) is one of the leading pioneers in the international field of Conceptual media art, performance, and film. After studying at the School for Arts and Crafts in Linz, she graduated from the Technical College of the Textile Industry in Vienna in 1964. In 1967 she created her pseudonym, written in all capital letters, to take on a new identity and liberate herself from the names of her father and her ex-husband. Her oeuvre involves videos, installations, performances, films, works of "expanded cinema," and Conceptual photography. Early on, she curated exhibitions with a feminist focus such as *MAGNA: Feminismus; Kunst und Kreativität* (MAGNA: Feminism; Art and Creativity) in 1975. EXPORT has participated in international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale (1980), documenta 6, documenta 12, the Kochi Biennale (2018), and the Moscow Biennale (2019). Her works have been presented in numerous solo and group shows, including those at the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Tate Modern, London. Her works are part of many of these collections. She has taught at the Art Institute in San Francisco, the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and the University of Art in Berlin, among others. She was a professor of multimedia performance at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne until 2005. The VALIE EXPORT Center in Linz was founded in 2015.

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, Dec 19, 2023

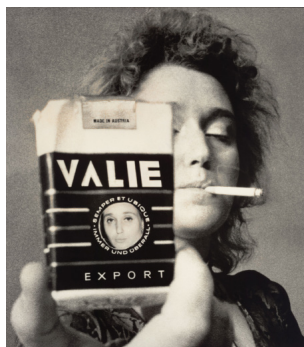
VALIE EXPORT

Retrospective

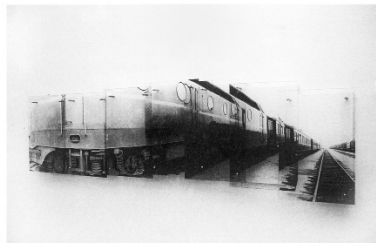
Exhibition	Jan 27 – May 21, 2024
Press Tour	Jan 26, 2024 . 11:00
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Opening Hours	Daily . 11:00–20:00
Admission	12/6 Euro
Organizer	C/O Berlin Foundation Amerika Haus . Hardenbergstraße 22–24 . 10623 Berlin Tel +49.30.284 44 16-0 . www.co-berlin.org www.facebook.com/coberlinphoto www.instagram.com/coberlin www.twitter.com/coberlin #coberlin #valieexportcoberlin
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In collaboration with	C/O Berlin Foundation
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PRESS IMAGES

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective



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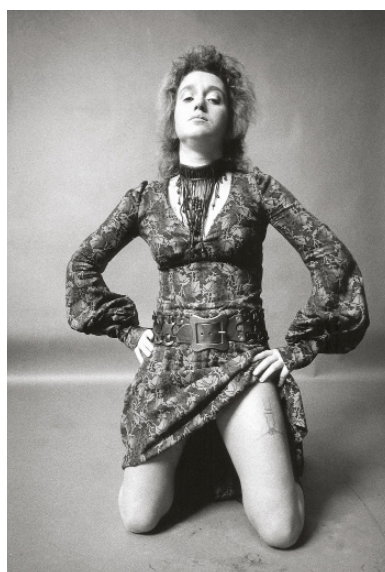
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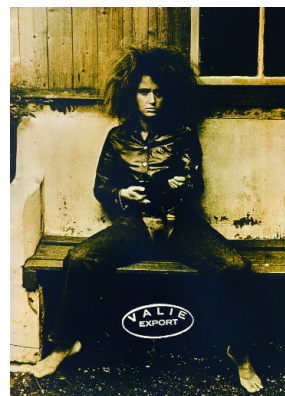
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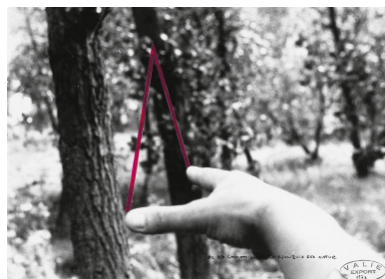
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06



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09



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PRESS IMAGES

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

01 VALIE EXPORT – SMART EXPORT, Self-Portrait, 1970, The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The ESSL Collection © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Gertraud Wolfschwenger © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **02** TRAIN II, 1972, Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **03** TOUCH CINEMA, 1968, The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The ESSL Collection © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Werner Schulz **04** Attach To, 1976, The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – Family collection Haselsteiner © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **05** After-Fitting, 1974, Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Eric Timmermann **06** BODY SIGN B, 1970, The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The ESSL Collection © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Gertraud Wolfschwenger © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **07** Action Pants: Genital Panic, 1969, Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Peter Hassmann © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **08** DIVIDE AND CONQUER! after: Martin Schongauer, “The Holy Family” 1475–1480, 1976, Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **09** From the Geometric Sketchbook of Nature: TREE TRIANGLE, 1973, Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023 **10** Injuries I, 1972, The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The ESSL Collection © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Hermann Hendrich **11** From the Portfolio of Dogness, 1968, In cooperation with Peter Weibel, Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © VALIE EXPORT, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023; Photo: Joseph Tandler

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WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

VALIE EXPORT (b. 1940) is one of the internationally most highly recognized media and performance artists. Growing up in Linz, she attended a local arts and crafts school from 1955 to 1958 and then moved to Vienna in 1960. Having graduated from a higher secondary school for the textile industry, she realized her first performative works beginning in 1967 in the context of Viennese Actionism, which in the 1960s broke with the traditional genres of painting and questioned bourgeois norms through its radical actions. Through her media-reflexive practice, EXPORT clearly distinguished herself from the movement's expressive pathos, however. The artist explicitly formulated her media critique as a feminist critique intrinsically linked with questioning the representation of the female body and the woman's role in a patriarchal society. By making reference to her own body, EXPORT examines social structures that are painfully inscribed in the female body through multiple media—including photography, video, and drawing.

The exhibition brings together works created between 1966 and 2009. It spans the period from VALIE EXPORT's pioneering early Expanded Cinema actions and symbol-laden performances to her conceptual photography and analytical language-based works, and on to her urban interventions of the Body Configurations and intermedia installations. It is a typical feature of EXPORT's practice that she revisits themes and motifs in diverse media and thus relates them to each other in ever-new constellations.

One focus of the exhibition is on the relevance of photography for the artist's work: there is no other medium EXPORT employs in such an enormously versatile fashion. From the outset she has conceived actions causally connected to photography, staging ephemeral performances for the static image. In her extensive group of conceptual photographs from the 1970s, she critically questions the equation of image with reality in the mass media. EXPORT's analysis of technical reproduction processes reveals how mass media first construct and then establish gender-specific images of identity. At the interface of body art, film, installation, and drawing, the works on view in the exhibition grant new insights into the artist's oeuvre. The relationship between "femininity" and representation, body and gaze, performance and image, as well as subject and space is characteristic of EXPORT's work.

Unless otherwise stated, the photographs are gelatin silver prints.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

Cutting

Cutting (1967/68) was one of VALIE EXPORT's earliest Expanded Cinema actions. The technique of editing or cutting was the artist's starting point when she examined the representation of reality in film and the media. Similar to her other Expanded Cinema works, EXPORT replaced elements of the film apparatus by non-filmic materials, such as paper, clothes, or the human body, using them as screen.

Cutting consists of five parts: At the beginning, EXPORT "opens" the window in a building façade projected onto a paper screen by cutting the motif out using scissors. In the second part she compares the various functions of writing and language. For this, she cuts the phrase "The content of the writing is the speech"—a quote from media theorist Marshall McLuhan—into the screen, yet speaking the last word "speech" instead of cutting ("writing") it. She subsequently cuts out the picture of a chewing gum bubble from a printed T-shirt worn by co-actor Peter Weibel and shaves the body hair of other participants. The provocative final, which, however, was not always part of the performance, shows EXPORT and Weibel practicing oral sex. Intended as embodiment of the term "body language," the action illustrates a direct form of communication that relies neither on words nor on images.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

TOUCH CINEMA

TOUCH CINEMA, performed in Vienna and Munich in 1968, is one of the artist's earliest actions, which were informed by the concept of Expanded Cinema. For this spectacular action, EXPORT mounted a box with a curtain that was to function as a "movie auditorium" in front of her naked upper body. In Vienna the action took place in the course of a film award ceremony, whereas in Munich EXPORT transferred it to the streets. Peter Weibel, her artist-colleague and then-partner, encouraged passers-by through a megaphone to put their hands inside the box and touch EXPORT's breasts for a given period of time. The body thus became a screen that could be experienced as a tactile event. Those visiting the TOUCH CINEMA maintained direct eye contact with the artist, so that the voyeuristic gaze that peruses a woman's body and which is normally concealed in the darkened auditorium, was exposed here.

Even in her first actions, VALIE EXPORT took the recording of the ephemeral processes on video and through photography into account, thus going far beyond the mere documentation of the performance: for the photograph's mise en scène, one of EXPORT's colleagues, acting as a surrogate for potential viewers, reached into the box. The video of the TOUCH CINEMA, which was recorded at a later date, was specifically made for Austrian television.

From the Portfolio of Dogness

In the legendary action *From the Portfolio of Dogness* (1968), VALIE EXPORT led the media artist Peter Weibel, crawling on all fours, on a leash across Kärntner Straße in downtown Vienna as if he were a dog. Both the allusion to sadism and masochism and Weibel's presentation as a passive man in a humiliating position and controlled by an active woman reversed common power structures and disclosed socially construed gender roles. The confrontation with a surprised audience in an urban environment, which always also stands for socio-political norms, was clearly informed by Viennese Actionism. From this perspective, Weibel's "canine" behavior can also be interpreted as expression of a conservative and patriarchal postwar society's mechanisms of power and oppression. EXPORT herself primarily saw this performance as a means of sociological research, exhibiting human behavioral norms through comparison with the beast.

Two filmmakers and the photographer Joseph Tendl accompanied the action on behalf of the performers. Tendl's photographs show the audience's response. Having taken his pictures over the shoulders of onlookers, he made sure that future viewers of the photographs would become part of the audience.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

Action Pants: Genital Panic

Action Pants: Genital Panic (1969) started out from a scandalous Expanded Cinema action: during an avant-garde film festival, VALIE EXPORT walked through the rows of a Munich movie theater auditorium wearing pants cut out in the pubic area. That same year, she elaborated on the basic idea of mirroring the audience's voyeurism for a photo series by collaborating photographer Peter Hassmann. In the series, EXPORT poses once again in revealing pants, this time intensifying the confrontational moment through a posture and attributes with masculine connotations: her legs spread, wearing a leather jacket, and carrying a machine gun, EXPORT undermines feminine stereotypes. Later on, she would reproduce the image, which stands out for its particular immediacy because of the artist's frontal view and EXPORT'S direct look into the camera, to put it up in the form of posters throughout the city. In what was both an actionist and a media-reflexive gesture EXPORT expanded her audience from the specific audience in a spatially enclosed movie theater auditorium to all potential viewers in public space.

VALIE EXPORT—SMART EXPORT Self-Portrait

At the age of 27, the artist, whose real name was Waltraud Höllinger (née Lehner), took on the name VALIE EXPORT. Spelled in capital letters and protected by copyright law, this trademark allowed her to rid herself of the family names of both her father and her former husband, by which she self-confidently positioned herself on an art scene dominated by men. The self-staging *VALIE EXPORT—SMART EXPORT Self-Portrait* (1970), captured by the freelance amateur photographer Gertraud Wolfswenger, playfully sharpens the theme. A lit cigarette between her lips and adopting a masculine pose, EXPORT holds a pack of Smart Export cigarettes into the camera that has been redesigned as her personal brand: she chose her first name as a brand name and a photograph of her face as a logo.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

BODY SIGN ACTION

A site of social and cultural conditioning, the female body is in the focus of VALIE EXPORT's work due to its semiotic readability. In a radical and painful action, the artist had a garter tattooed onto her thigh in Frankfurt in 1970. EXPORT sees the garter as a sign of bondage, which in her eyes stands for the "repression of sexuality" and a "femininity defined by others," and which exposes the woman's role in society as a sexual object molded according to male ideas. The work is characteristic of EXPORT's strategy to elaborate on her actions through photography. With the aid of a self-timer, the artist focused on the garter and her exposed pubic area. Fragmented and rendered without a face, her body is stripped of individuality and generalized. On the other hand, the full-length portraits taken by the photographer Gertraud Wolfschwenger show the artist as an individual opposing patriarchal attitudes with a challenging look into the camera.

HOMOMETER

In the early 1970s, VALIE EXPORT staged a series of performances illustrating the power of socio-political norms over the female individual. The use of symbolic materials having multiple meanings is key to the implementation of this action. In *HOMOMETER* (1973), the artist tied two big loaves of bread to her legs. A symbol of nutrition, the human body, and motherhood, the bread loaves hinder EXPORT from moving forward, pulling her down. Moreover, bread can be interpreted as vital raw material that makes man dependent and easy to oppress, for example in global conflicts. In 1976, VALIE EXPORT developed the action further for *HOMO METER II*. With a loaf of bread tied to her belly, she invited passersby on Vienna's Mariahilfer Straße to cut off a slice using a knife. The body, expanded by the bread, thus exposed its vulnerability, while religious symbolism is inherent to the action of sharing and eating together.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

CAUSALGIA

Together with *ASEMIA—The Inability to Express Oneself through Facial Expressions* and *HYPERBULIA*, *CAUSALGIA* is one of three performances from 1973 in which VALIE EXPORT made reference to pathological states to examine the condition of the woman oppressed by society. Causalgia describes a permanent state of burning pain caused by an injury of the nerves. The performance, which was first staged at Galerie MAERZ in Linz, consisted of four parts. Using slide projections, tape recordings of her own voice, and bodily actions, EXPORT elucidated the subject of the body as material for socio-cultural inscriptions. For example, projected images included the anthropological photograph of a tattooing ritual or the picture of the tattooed garter from her *BODY SIGN ACTION* (1970). She also broke off a piece of the gallery's wall and cut the clothes off a participating performer's body. In the final and most action-packed part, the artist drew a male co-actor's larger-than life shadow onto a wax plate using a welding torch, lay down within the demarcated area, and then had herself fenced in with electric wire along the shadow's outlines. She rolled against the glowing wire for several minutes, until she was able to overcome it and break free from the man's shadow. In the end, EXPORT filled the indentations left in the wax plate by body heat with liquid lead.

ASEMIA – The Inability to Express Oneself through Facial Expressions

In the action of the same name from 1973, the clinical picture of Asemia—an impairment of the ability to communicate with one's environment through signs or gestures—was used by VALIE EXPORT to address socially enforced muteness. In the course of the action, the artist poured wax over a (seemingly) living bird, a symbol of freedom. Subsequently, she also covered her own feet and hands with the sizzling hot substance and eventually cut herself free with a knife in her mouth. VALIE EXPORT staged this action for photography. Two photographers were present: while Alfred Damm mostly presented the sequence of events as if taking place on a stage, from a relatively large distance, Ludwig Hoffenreich worked out the physical dimension of the action through close-up views in square medium-format pictures. Seen through the lenses of the two photographers, the action resembles two different translations. From the photographs it becomes clear that performance and photography were inseparably linked. Time and again, the artist had to adapt the course of the action to the conditions of the photographic process and pose for the static image. Soon afterwards, VALIE EXPORT also performed the action for the shooting of a video; the yellow press condemned it as scandalous on the occasion of its screening in 1977, and the artist was accused of animal abuse. After she was able to prove that the bird's being covered with wax was the result of an illusion achieved by the editing technique, she was absolved.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

HYPERBULIA

In *HYPERBULIA* (1973), the staging of pain likewise plays a central role. The action, inspired by a pathological increase of will in the context of mental illness, showed how EXPORT moved through a corridor formed by stretched electric wire, exposing herself to electric shocks. Standing upright at first, the artist was forced into a crawling position on all fours. This sequence of body postures typifies socio-political processes that discipline the individual despite his or her willpower. The repetition of the pain exposes these connections and makes it possible to overcome it at the moment of resistance and self-empowerment.

... Remote ... Remote ...

In her uncompromising filmic work ... *Remote ... Remote ...* (1973), VALIE EXPORT's strategy to illustrate mental states through injuries inflicted on one's own body reaches a climax. The film, which is hardly ten minutes long, shows how the artist cuts her cuticles with a Stanley knife until she bleeds. She repeatedly dips her fingers into milk, which is associated with diverse meanings, such as that of being a healing liquid. On the one hand, EXPORT's gesture of self-injury can be interpreted as painful exaggeration of beauty ideals and physical perfection. On the other hand, it can be understood as an expression of traumatic experiences of the past. For example, the artist is shown sitting in front of a blown-up black-and-white photograph from police archives showing abused children. The film is edited in such a way that the artist is directly related to the protagonists in the photographs, such as when a close-up of the eye of one of the children is immediately followed by a shot of EXPORT's eye.

Adjunct Dislocations

VALIE EXPORT's analysis of space is characterized by her fathoming the boundaries between subjective and technical perception. Consistently undermining central perspective, she unmasks it as an ideologically appropriated pictorial construction that contradicts human vision. In *Photo Notes for Film* (1974), the artist rotated the camera by 20 degrees every hour to create a panorama. What human perception can only take in successively is thus made visible here simultaneously. For the film *Adjunct Dislocations* (1973), EXPORT strapped two 8-millimeter cameras to her chest and back, moving around in the city and countryside as if equipped with prosthetic devices. The surroundings reveal themselves in relation to the movements of the body, so that EXPORT endows the technical medium with subjectivity. Her colleague Hermann Hendrich recorded this performance. In the final work, the combination of his shots with EXPORT's films didactically conveys the way media reproduce the world.

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VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

Glass Plate with Shot

Glass Plate with Shot (1972) is an outstanding example of EXPORT's strategy to interweave media reflexivity and performance. Standing in the Belgian dune landscape, EXPORT can be seen holding a glass plate with a hole in front of her body. She alternately places the opening in front of her eyes, forehead, breast, and genitals. The bullet hole in the plate evokes the metaphorical phrase "to shoot a picture" and is an expression of the aggressive and voyeuristic gaze that places the photographer, who is distinctly reflected in the glass plate, and his model in a hierarchical power relationship identifying gender inequalities.

TIME POEM / 24 Hours Photographed 24 Times

The representation of temporal sequences is a central theme in VALIE EXPORT's conceptual photographs. Whereas in *TRAIN II* (1972) she moved the camera, in *TIME POEM / 24 Hours Photographed 24 Times* she took a photograph from a fixed standpoint at the window of her apartment every sixty minutes over a period of twenty-four hours. A vantage point for spatial constructions based on the concept of central perspective and rendered on a two-dimensional plane, the open window has been a metaphor for the world outside since the Renaissance. We encounter historical forerunners for the representation of chronology in the scientific experiments of photographer Eadweard Muybridge, who in the 1870s captured movement by taking pictures at regular time intervals. Through this practice, the artist's role in the creation of a picture in conceptual photography was redefined: the photographer was forced to yield to a precisely defined temporal grid and the mechanical processes of the camera.

Study on Moving Path Pictures

In *Study on Moving Path Pictures* (1970/72), VALIE EXPORT shot one picture per second from the side window of a moving car, thus also recording a line previously applied to the window pane. Through the montage of the individual images as a horizontal band, the artist simulates a filmic camera movement and consequently a flowing continuum of space and time, which photography is normally unable to reproduce.

TRAIN II

For *TRAIN II* (1972), by rotating a firmly positioned camera, VALIE EXPORT split up the motif of a train parked on the tracks into individual images, which she then put together to create a kind of filmic sequence. The shift in perspective and the resulting rendering of various vanishing points and proportions add a dynamic aspect to the illusion of spatial depth. The train, which is actually static, seems to be moving. EXPORT's works are frequently preceded by written concepts. In conceptual art of that time photography was mostly considered a technically mediocre document for a textually formulated, "dematerialized" idea, materiality and work character play an important role in EXPORT's practice. For *TRAIN II*, she ingeniously overlapped the photographs transferred to several glass plates to create a relief.

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Lettering

Lettering—“*Train of Writing*” (1972) is characteristic of VALIE EXPORT’s intensive preoccupation with the thought of how language can produce meaning. For EXPORT, language comprises various media and sign systems, from writing to the body to photography. She started out from the assumption that these languages differ from one another, that they may contradict one another, and that they convey information in their own idiosyncratic ways. *Lettering* combines photography and writing in a game on words. In the photo series, VALIE EXPORT writes the German word “Schriftzug” (“Schrift” meaning “writing” and “Zug” meaning “train”) in white chalk onto a railway car in Vienna’s old Südbahnhof, demonstrating the ambiguity of the term through its literal translation in the context of an action.

From the Humanoid Sketchbook of Nature: Ontological Leap I-III

VALIE EXPORT analyzes the representation of the female body in image-within-image constructions combining performance and conceptual photography. In the three-part work *From the Humanoid Sketchbook of Nature: Ontological Leap I-III* (1974), EXPORT at first photographed her feet in the sand viewed from above and in black and white. In the second shot, this time in color and likewise viewed from above, the artist stands on the first picture, right next to the representation of her feet. In the last photograph, the artist stands on the second picture, which is now placed on a carpet in an interior. Through the motifs of sand and rug, EXPORT presents the body not only as a part of nature, but also as being informed by culture. The video installation *Touching. Body Poem* (1970), the representation of the body by a medium is also conveyed through the act of touching. While in *Ontological Leap I-III* a photograph is presented as a tactile object, in *Touching. Body Poem*, the feet, filmed from below through a glass plate, seem to be stepping against the screens.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

From the Humanoid Sketchbook of Nature: Ontological Leap I-III

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Sight Text: Finger Poem

In VALIE EXPORT's work, the study of the body as a carrier of information is closely related to an analysis of language, which is part of an individual's identity and at the same time is determined by social structures. Many works by the artist illustrate how language can be articulated in various ways: as spoken sounds, as writing, or through the body. For the photo collage *Sight Text: Finger Poem* (1968), EXPORT created letters with the aid of sign language and had them depicted in individual photographs. In the final arrangement, they make up a free and ambiguous quote from a text by the philosopher Martin Heidegger about the nature of images: "I say the sign with the signs in the sign of that which is spoken." For *Sight Text: Finger Poem* it was for the first time that EXPORT staged a performance in the form of photographs. The artist realized this work in a number of different versions. Here you can see the original prints that were directly pinned to the wall when they were presented for the first time in 1977.

Reenactments

In *Reenactments* from 1976, VALIE EXPORT, with the aid of a model, restages poses having especially female connotations from classical paintings by Sandro Botticelli or Rogier van der Weyden. EXPORT's goal to "quasi-surgically remove an archive of body postures" in this way serves the purpose of exposing visually inherited gender roles. In the model's contemporary clothing or the installation-like combination of photographs and reproduced paintings, the artist deviates from the original pictures. This discrepant repetition of poses showcases female stereotypes and roles—such as the woman as Charis or mother.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

Body Configurations

VALIE EXPORT's group of works of the *Body Configurations* dates from the period between 1972 and 1982 and was realized in four phases. Among the earliest pictures are those taken by Eric Timmermann in a dune landscape. They are closely related to the conceptual photographs: VALIE EXPORT is shown crouching, reclining, or bending in the natural landscape, creating references between body and landscape through formal analogies and relational proportions. The *Body Configurations* are complex explorations of the socio-political dimensions of space and its structure, a regulator of human behavior. For EXPORT, the female body is experienced in the difference to its surroundings, the so-called "surrounding body." The postures taken by the artist are therefore "expressions of inner states" and "a visible externalization of inner states through configurations of the body with its environment." The titles chosen by the artist, such as *Crossing* (1972), for example, underline the psychological dimension with regard to the posture.

From the Humanoid Sketchbook of Nature: Hand Figurations

In the group of works *From the Humanoid Sketchbook of Nature* (1973), the body is once again the central motif of EXPORT's analytical photography. She uses the hand stretched out into the landscape to examine the relationship between body and surroundings and the representation of space in photography. Both the paradoxical proportions between the hand in the foreground of the picture and the landscape in the background and a graphic post-editing device in the form of a diagonal line underscore that photography, being two-dimensional, is only able to suggest spatial depth. The work *From the Humanoid Sketchbook of Nature* presents the body as part of the landscape on the basis of morphological similarities. An arm drawn into a natural setting or hands photographed against a backdrop of dunes emphasize the form of the landscape and make it complete. EXPORT further developed this theme in the group of the *Body Configurations* (1972–1982).

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

Body Configurations

In the main group of the *Body Configurations* (1972–1982), the body intervenes directly with Vienna's urban space at the interface of psychological dimension and cultural norm. The earlier photographs by Hermann Hendrich from 1972 show EXPORT in the context of postwar buildings, signifying a society that is still wounded by the catastrophe of World War II. For the photographs dating from 1976, EXPORT switched to the position behind the camera, working with a model in the surroundings of Vienna's monumental buildings, including City Hall. Materializations of socio-political power in stone, on a second level these buildings represent patriarchal structures, such as laws made by men. VALIE EXPORT frequently expanded her photographs by adding graphic elements. Lines and geometric forms enhance the relationship between body and environment, endowing space with a dynamic element and abstracting the body. In the closely related work *Lightning and Thunder* (1976), EXPORT transforms the body— by changing the perspective—with the aid of linear patterns, which she additionally translated into a drawing. The most recent *Body Configurations*, dating from 1982, revisit this practice, translating the body captured on Vienna's Heldenplatz or near the Palace of Justice into geometric forms through views from above.

Fragments of the Images of a Caress

In the installation *Fragments of the Images of a Caress* (1994), which is media-reflexive and poetic alike, 18 illuminated light bulbs are completely steeped in cylinders filled with oil, milk substitute, or water. The liquids refract the light in different ways, thus creating an instantaneous sensuous experience that is actually based on a filmic analysis. The number of 18 light bulbs equals the minimum number of frames per second required for movement to be perceived as fluent when a filmstrip is projected at the cinema. Moreover, the black, white, and transparent liquids correspond to the color values of black-and-white film when light shines through. In this sense, VALIE EXPORT understands *Fragments of the Images of a Caress* as a filmic work, as a "pure black-and-white film." What is more, the contact of water and electricity holds a moment of risk.

WALL TEXTS

VALIE EXPORT . Retrospective

I turn over the pictures of my voice in my head

Voice, language, and speech are recurrent themes in VALIE EXPORT's work. In its unsettling explicitness, the video *I turn over the pictures of my voice in my head* (2008) demonstrates the anatomical process of speaking by showing a glottis—the gap between the two vocal folds in the larynx. The film, in which EXPORT appears herself, was done with the aid of a laryngoscope, a medical apparatus used to view and image the larynx.

Encumbered by the procedure, VALIE EXPORT reads out a text about the significance and function of the voice. An integral part of the body and modulated by social rules, one's voice establishes identity. EXPORT's articulation, performed with audible effort, stands for the difficulties a woman experiences when she wants to make herself heard in a patriarchal society.

Macht der Sprache

As in VALIE EXPORT's *I turn over the pictures of my voice in my head* (2008), her *Macht der Sprache* (2002) shows a glottis in the act of speaking, filmed using a laryngoscope. The 2008 work shows EXPORT herself speaking, whereas *Macht der Sprache* shows the glottis of a man. A set of interconnected monitors broadcasts the time-lapsed sentence he speaks: "The power of language shows its trace long after the silence." With this, EXPORT illustrates the influence—and the power—of words spoken by men. She took as her starting point the speech given by U.S. President George W. Bush following the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001.