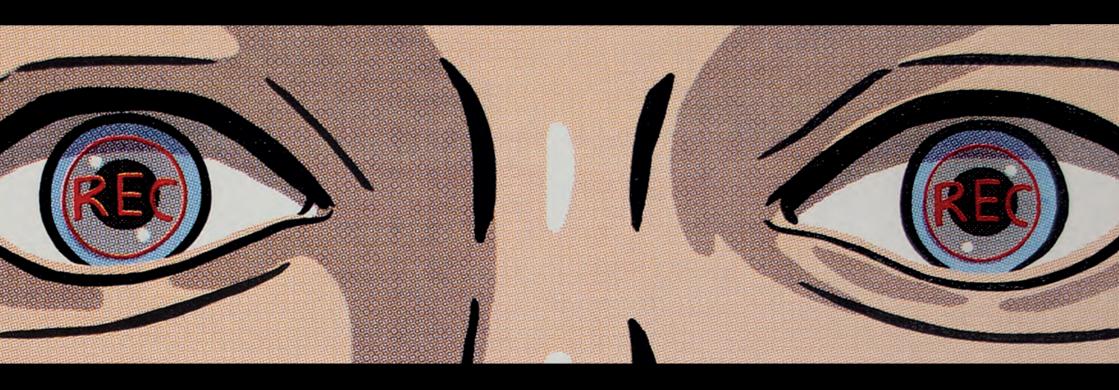


## SCENCE FIGHERAL SCHAELAKONRAD

MARO



#### MICHAELA KONRAD

MICHAELA KONRAD invites you onto a journey through popular culture of recent decades and future realities with her work SCIENCE FICTION. In sequences and series, whose visual aesthetics are based on midcentury comics, vintage game design, science fiction pulp magazines and past mass-culture phenomena, she delivers an artistic examination of the great questions of humanity. In a time where we are confronted with a flood of both information and images, she strives for clarity and orientation. In this way, science, philosophy and contemporary history become the sources of inspiration for her art, which she playfully incorporates into her work.

Michaela Konrad's work encompasses a wide spectrum of media – focussing mainly on painting, offset lithography and multimedia installations, whereby the idea is always the premise and the drawing the basis of her creative endeavours.

She paints in the tradition of flat painting, avoiding the artistic gesture. Rather, she strives to reduce the line, the brushstroke and the form to the bare essential. For her, painting is a kind of meditation. After brainstorming, researching and creating the preliminary drawings, the act of painting becomes a focussed craft. In various projects she experiments with new media and creates a combination of digital and traditional drawing. Her multimedia installation work is produced mainly in collaboration with the Romanian artists Eugen Neacsu, Octavian Horvath and Daniel Dorobantu.

## CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? Volume 1

### CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? Volume 1

At the age of 22 Michaela Konrad came across Aldous Huxley's book ,Brave New World Revisited' for the first time. In this 1958 collection of essays, the author analyses his novel, published some thirty years earlier, and comes to the conclusion that many of the predictions he made at the time could soon come true. He depicts a world that will have more than six billion inhabitants after the turn of the millennium. And he describes the pressure that this ever-growing population will exert on the earth's finite resources.

Huxley points to the rapid technological progress and the consequent increasing concentration of power and money in politics, business and the media. He predicts the disappearance of the *working man* who won't be able raise sufficient funds to keep up with the big players. He sheds light on the manipulations of advertising and the entertainment industry with their constant distractions. And he alludes to the danger that these social and political changes might rob people of freedom. Democratic states are threatened by a gradual transformation into authoritarian systems that only give the appearance of democracies.

One cannot prepare intensively for a war unless in a totalitarian regime.

Aldous Huxley

In the first part of her project CAN THIS BE TOMORROW?, Michaela Konrad transports the recipients to the golden age of the 1950s. She presents a series of fictional comic book covers in the style of the American Golden Age comics. Inspired by fantasists like Aldous Huxley, George Orwell or Phillip K. Dick, she creates a bygone vision of current events. The video project CAN THIS BE?, which completes the hand-printed cover pictures, playfully examines the prognoses of our present, made at the time.

An altered perspective on the present can create distance – a distance that we need in order to find orientation in the thicket of many simultaneous events in the here and now – according to Michaela Konrad's thesis.



TOMORROW, 2018, 60 x 42,6 cm, hand printed offset lithograph.

#### **CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? Volume 1**

7 paintings, acrylic on canvas

100 x 70 cm

15 hand printed offset lithographs

60 x 42,6 cm

2018/2019

in a limited portfolio edition of 17 copies.

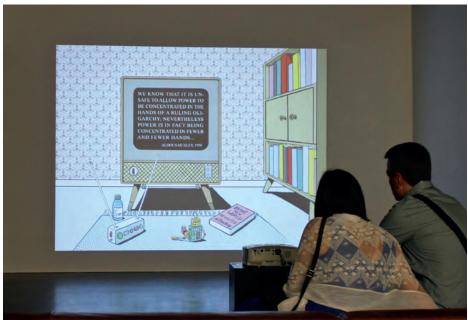
#### **CAN THIS BE?**

Video, 12 min 26 s

First shown

at Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, 2018, Bregenz (AUT).





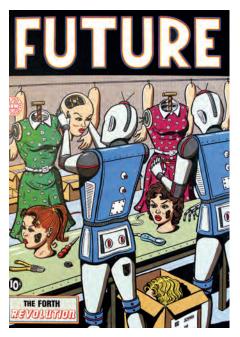
CAN THIS BE TOMORROW?, 2018, Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, Bregenz (AUT).





CAN THIS BE TOMORROW?, 2018, Parallel Vienna with Lisi Hämmerle, Vienna (AUT).





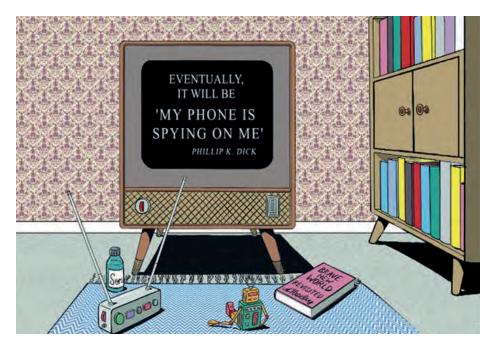


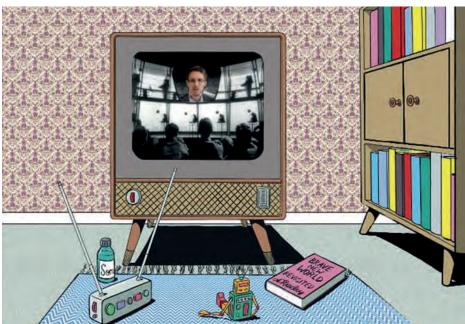


THE SECRET A COMPLETLY NEW DIRECTION IN ESPIONAGE! THE FATE OF THE WHISTLE-BLOWER, WHO WANTED TO SERVE HIS NATION

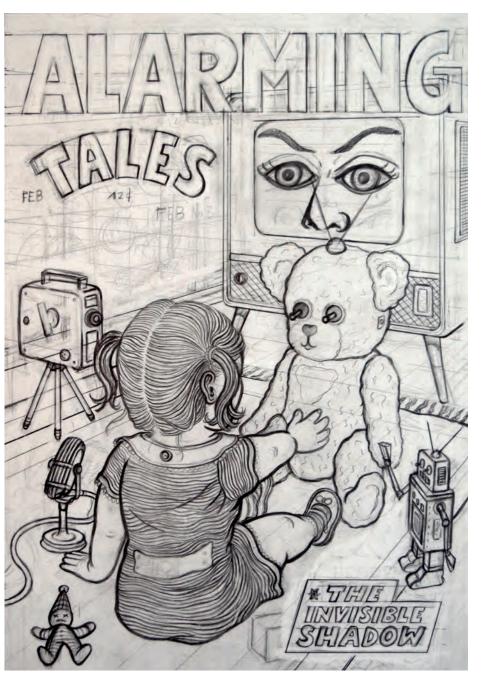
CAN THIS BE TOMORROW?, 2018, Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, Bregenz (AUT).

CAN THIS BE TOMORROW?, 2018, Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, Bregenz (AUT).





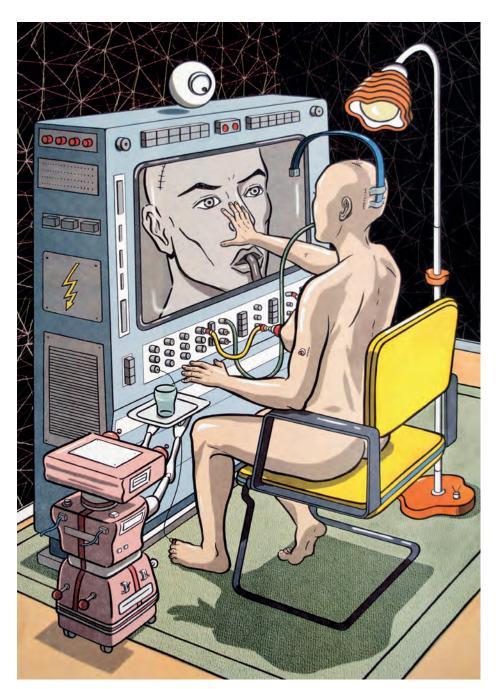
CAN THIS BE?, 2018, video stills.



THE INVISIBLE SHADOW, 2018, 45 x 35 cm, preliminary drawing.

#### **PICTURES OF TOMORROW**

**CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? Volume 2** 



CYBORG'S LOVE, 2019, 90 x 60 cm, hand printed offset lithograph.

#### PICTURES OF TOMORROW

**CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? Volume 2** 

We are in the midst of a societal and technological process of change that is constantly accelerating. In a time when we are faced with an unparalleled flood of images and information, Michaela Konrad sees her responsibility as an artist, among other things, in the recognition of the big picture, the major nexuses and making it the subject of her artistic work.

Many technology enthusiasts believe that we are at the beginning of a new stage in human evolution, that the people of the future, the people of the next evolutionary stage, will be cyborgs. In essence, human beings who are improved with the help of technology that has transcended the boundaries of the body. Already, there are examples of this today: people with pacemakers or colour-blind people who are finally able to see the world in colour with the help of microchips implanted in their brains. There are no limits to the imagination of software developers, engineers and investors. The most outlandish ideas of classic science fiction writers are about to become reality. Faster, better, smarter, more beautiful, more intelligent – all of it is within reach.

A new level of human development can also be achieved by intervening in the human genome. In California, babies with specific physical characteristics have been created to order in vitro for years. Soon it will be possible to add psychological properties to the physical ones. Is that the course of evolution?

The ethical and moral issue of genetic engineering also concerns the unprecedented inequality created by these costly technologies. Which children will have chips in their brains whose computing power could soon be the basic requirement for a position as CEO of a multinational corporation? And won't these children be more beautiful and healthier than their contemporaries from poorer backgrounds? Traditional inequality, supported by technological disruption, may soon reach a level that brings social mobility to a standstill.

The second part of the project CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? revolves around the question in which direction the technological revolution will propel our society in the coming decades. Michaela Konrad's research addresses questions about the future of work, the significance of the gaming industry, the amalgamation of states and transnational corporations as well as the ever-increasing threat from environmental destruction. What happens to people whose actions are constantly recorded, analysed and utilised? Where do personal goals lead us in a world in which the algorithms of Google and Co. know us better than we know ourselves?

Michaela Konrad also poses the question as to the future aesthetics of creative work. Many classic science fiction films such as Star Trek would have us believe that the clothing and accessories of the future will look just as modern as the technology we use. However, the artist believes in the opposite – she believes in a retro-design brave new world. And so this premise was implemented as a basic visual element of her series, which was completed at the end of 2020.

She deliberately omits the continuous and omnipresent threat of a nuclear catastrophe. Not because the threat is not real, but because avoiding it is a basic requirement for human survival on our planet.

#### PICTURES OF TOMORROW CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? Volume 2

4 paintings, acrylic on canvas, various sizes further paintings in progress 15 handprinted offset lithographs 90 x 60 cm and 60 x 90 cm 2019/2020 in a limited portfolio edition of 9 copies. Selected pieces shown at Galerie Trapp, 2020/2021, Salzburg (AUT) and at the Parallel with Lisi Hämmerle, 2019, Vienna (AUT).



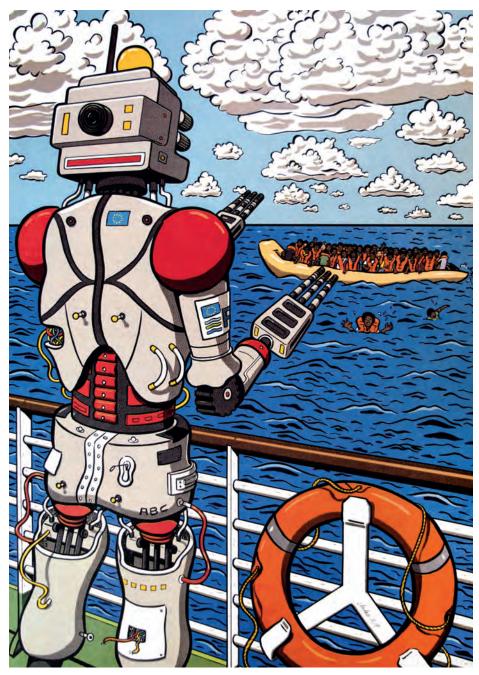
CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? PICTURES OF TOMORROW, 2021, Galerie Karin Sachs, München (DEU).



CAN THIS BE TOMORROW? PICTURES OF TOMORROW, 2021, Galerie Karin Sachs, München (DEU).



PICTURES OF TOMORROW, 2021, Parallel Vienna with Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, Wien (AUT).



LAWS (or THE PROGRAMMER'S DILEMMA), 2020, 90 x 60 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.

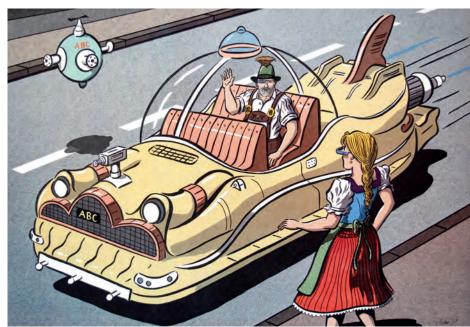


RECORD, 2020, 90 x 60 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.



DRONES, 2020, 90 x 60 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.



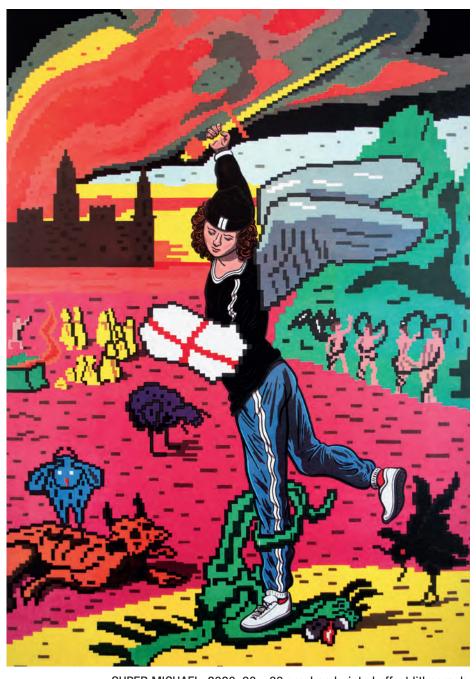


GOOGLE POLICE, 2020, 90 x 60 cm, handprinted offset lithograph. AUTONOMOUS CAR, 2020, 60 x 90 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.





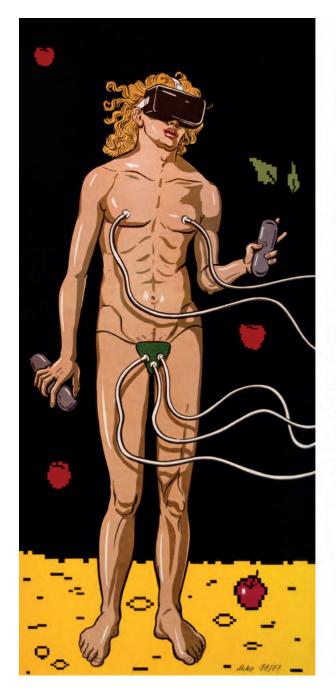
GRANDPA IS BACK, 2020, 60 x 90 cm, handprinted offset lithograph. COCA COLA ARMY, 2020, 60 x 90 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.



SUPER MICHAEL, 2020, 90 x 60 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.



WHERE ARE THE INSECTS?, 2020, 60 x 90 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.

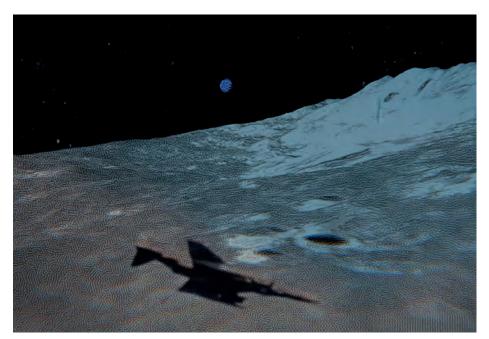




RENDEZ-VOUS IN PARADISE, 2020, 40 x 90 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.

## **LIGHT-YEAR** LOOKING BACK TO EARTH

# AND THAT MAY JUST QUALIFY US TO - AS NUMANS FROM ERRIN-



LIGHT-YEAR, LOOKING BACK TO EARTH, 2019, video stills.

## **LIGHT-YEAR**LOOKING BACK TO EARTH

On February 18, 2021, the Nasa rover Perseverance landed on Mars, one of several successful expeditions to the red planet in recent decades. Our expectations of gaining in-depth scientific knowledge are high and will likely be met. We may even find out that there was life on Mars. But something is still missing: no human being has landed on Mars and can tell us what it *feels* like to have been there.

Apart from the astronauts and cosmonauts at the International Space Station in nearearth orbit, we have to go back to the late 1960s and early 1970s to find out what happens to the mind of a person who travels to a distant celestial body and looks back at earth.

To date, only twenty-four men have had this extraordinary experience. They saw the earth as a whole – as a small, blue and fragile sphere, lost in a pitch-black universe. And this change of perspective also led to a change in consciousness.

These twenty-four men remembered the technically and physically challenging Apollo training program that did not prepare them for the psychological shock triggered by this dramatic change of perspective. After their adventure, they reported strange sensations, as if the earth were a living being. They described seeing an earth without national borders. That these boundaries only existed in people's minds. And they told of the profound realisation that we are all one. That we have to preserve our environment and our living space in order to be able to live and survive together on this planet.

Sometimes it is easy to forget that what is probably mankind's greatest achievement took place against the backdrop of the violent and seemingly unending Vietnam War. Most of the Apollo astronauts were trained test pilots in the US military, and some of them even flew missions in the recent Korean War. The last man on the moon, Gene Cernan, said he would have fought in Vietnam had he not been part of the Apollo program. And previous comrades-in-arms declared the Apollo program was the only thing the US could really be proud of.

In 2011 the Apollo veterans Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Gene Cernan, Jim Lovell and Charly Duke met at the Starmus Festival in Tenerife. This is where artist Michaela Konrad heard Neil Armstrong's speech about humans, the future of humanity and the future of space travel. It was one of his last public appearances and he passed away just a year later.

LIGHT-YEAR, a computer animation by Michaela Konrad (idea and graphic implementation) in cooperation with Romanian artists Eugen Neacsu (video effects) and Octavian Horvath (sound design), was first presented in September 2019 at Parallel Vienna with gallery owner Lisi Hämmerle.

With the 3D sequences and the painted textures that Michaela Konrad realised for the animation, she tried to recreate some of the key moments that the astronauts had experienced on the moon or in lunar orbit. An excerpt from Neil Armstrong's speech — A LEGACY FOR ALL HUMANITY — slowly moves through the animation in the form of subtitles.

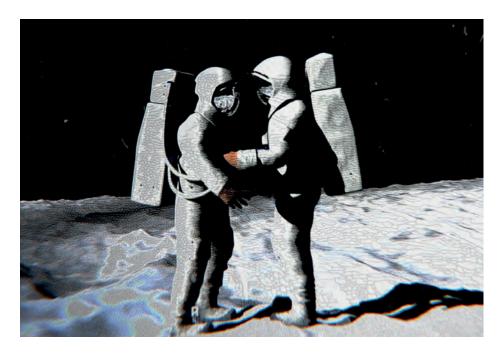
#### LIGHT-YEAR LOOKING BACK TO EARTH

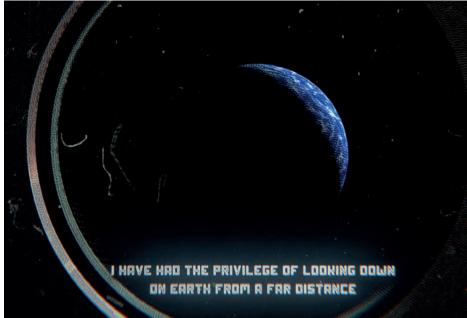
Video, 16 min 2019 First shown at Parallel Vienna, 2019, Vienna (AUT).

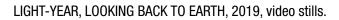
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**LOOKING BACK ON EARTH** 

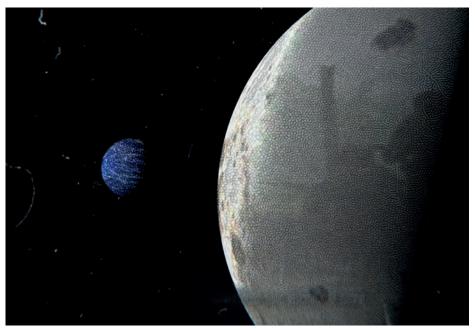
graphical sheets, gouache on paper, as inspiration for the creation of the video, also video backgrounds and textures.











LIGHT-YEAR, LOOKING BACK TO EARTH, 2019, video stills.

The cosmonaut Olga is the protagonist at the centre of the SPACELOVE cycle. She travels through space and time and considers the great questions of humanity from new angles. Olga's parallel world appears as a smooth projection surface that leaves the recipient space for their own interpretations. The images — whether the surface of the moon or spaceships — are reduced to the essentials and therefore easy to experience. And yet individual, apparently randomly placed objects or flashes of thought lead into a depth that, depending on how far you want to get involved, allows you to drift into ironic perspectives on the fundamentals of humanity.

Started as a mini comic soap-opera, which was published in a small, self-bound, limited edition volume, the retro-space-love adventure, intended as a gag, slowly developed into a multimedia art project in the following years. Olga's experiences as Michaela Konrad's alter ego are related in paintings, limited editions, multimedia installations and experimental comic publications. The narrative thread does not consist of a story in the actual sense, but of individual episodes, each of which results in a self-contained pictorial poem. Existential considerations and personal experiences of the artist are connected and implemented in sequences with or without text.

SPACELOVE is visually inspired by golden age science fiction comics such as Flash Gordon by Alex Raymond or by science fiction television series such as Space 1999 or Star Trek. Michaela Konrad paraphrases icons of pop culture and assimilates them into her work, which is stylistically characterized by a clear language of forms and bright colours.

Part 1

**SPACELOVE Love in Space** 

Video, 1 min 26 s

**SPACELOVE Love in Space** 

Mini comic book 1999

limited edition of 37 copies

#### Part 2

#### **SPACELOVE Love in Space**

Volume consisting of parts 2 and 3 2004 limited edition of 54 copies. 4 paintings, oil on canvas 2012.

#### Part 3

#### THE VACUUM CLEANER

17 handprinted offset lithographs 42 x 29,7 cm 2005/2006 in a limited portfolio edition of 30 copies. First shown at the Romanian Cultural Institute 2006, Vienna (AUT).

#### Part 4

#### A COSMIC PHENOMENON

5 handprinted offset lithographs 59.4 x 42 cm 2006

in a limited portfolio edition of 17 copies.

#### Part 5

#### **IMAGINARY FIGURES**

graphical sheets, overpainted digital prints on paper 50 x 50 cm

2007

in a limited portfolio edition of 17 copies. 4 paintings

2014.

#### Part 6

#### **MOON WALKER**

25 paintings, oil in canvas, various sizes 2008/2015.

#### MOON WALKER

Comic, 64 pages Luftschacht Publishers, Vienna (AUT) Hardcover, partly in colour,

with a preface by Klaus Albrecht Schröder, director of the Albertina, Vienna (AUT).

#### Part 7

#### **SCIENCE**

2014 Among other places shown at Galeria Arsenal

4 paintings, oil in canvas

as part of the Ligatura Festivals, 2014, Poznan (POL).



OLGA MIT HYPERKUBUS, 2014, detail, 100 x 80 cm, oil on canvas.

SPACELOVE started in 2003 as a mini comic soap-opera and soon developed into an intermedia project that includes oil paintings, limited-edition offset prints, comic publications and multimedia installations.

At the centre of this series is the protagonist Olga, who deals with basic questions of existence in the living space made available to her. Olga is the common thread in this sequential work cycle, which Michaela Konrad weaves around existential questions and ties to references of the collective memory of a human race who experiences the greatest possible distance from the space traveler. It is precisely this spatial detachment in the realised fiction of space that allows Olga's philosophical thoughts to have an unmistakably vivid impact on the viewer, heightened by the clarity and colour intensity of the representations, reminiscent of pop art.

The added elective affinity to the science fiction comics of the 50s and 60s of the last century, as staged by Michaela Konrad, allows her to bring the discourse about female authority and female thinking into Olga's universe. Not only is the genre originally dominated by a masculinity re-thought by the protagonist, the feminine mind and body space is also questioned when the heroine is confronted with fundamental and thus ultimately gender-unspecific questions of quantum theory, astronomy and general physics.

Michaela Konrad conceives of an intergalactic cosmos that enables her to generate a variety of new ways in dealing with her own world of thought. Her design vocabulary always remains clear, straightforward and noiseless.

WHERE DO WE COME FROM?, 2012, 100 x 70 cm, oil on canvas.

#### **MONDWANDLER**

What do you see? What do you think? What do you feel when you look at the earth from the moon? This graphic volume by an extraordinary artist — Michaela Konrad — answers these essential questions. The answers shed light on our very being, about the meaning and importance of the individual as a tiny part of an all-encompassing universe. Twenty-four men have made their way to the earth's satellite in order to look at their home planet from there. And their thoughts, feelings and experiences were the starting point for this sensitive, subtle and brilliant work. Michaela Konrad has embarked on a very special search for clues. Quotes from the astronauts on the American Apollo missions resulted in a sensitively told and precisely drawn story.

She sends her protagonist — who is already known from her serial works — on a journey. It is a trip to the moon like those twenty-four men made before her. She orbits the moon, lands on it and becomes a moonwalker. Yet the moon is always in stark contrast to the protagonist, the bold colours solely reserved for her. The scenery is drawn in the "non-colours" black, white and grey and it is reminiscent of the many overexposed photos of the Apollo missions.

In the cold, barren lunar landscape there are objects that were actually left behind by the astronauts on the lunar surface. Thus both the narrative text, through the quotes from the astronauts, and the graphics, through the symbolic objects, are imbued with a reference to reality.

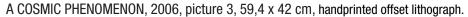
The recipient is immersed in an exact setting that has been reduced to the essentials with just a few lines. The quotes from the astronauts work like a vortex in the interplay of colours and the clarity of lines — leading to a reflection on existence. And like a trip to the moon, reading this book can change the way you look at life.

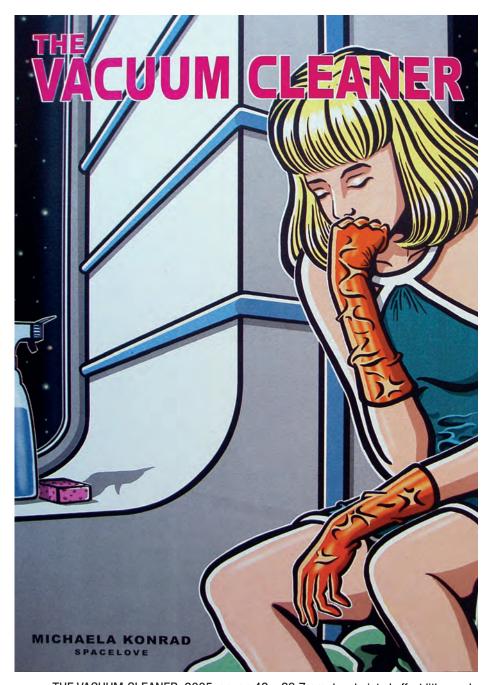
Michaela Konrad's work is characterized by precision, clarity and a unique perspective on the big picture. A few years ago I had the opportunity to get to know her artistic work. And so it is a particular pleasure for me that eighteen of her works have been purchased for the graphic collection of the Albertina Vienna.

The present book MOONWALKERS is a very special kind of travel story. The journey to the moon is a cosmic destination and at the same time a long journey to oneself.

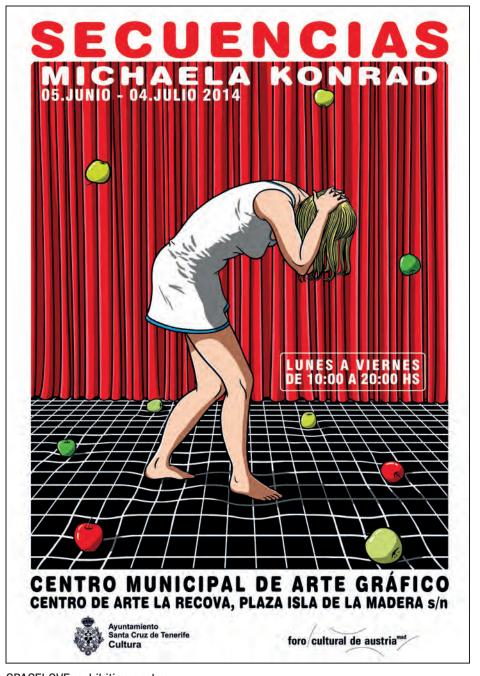
KLAUS ALBRECHT SCHRÖDER, director of the Albertina, Vienna (AUT)







THE VACUUM CLEANER, 2005, cover, 42 x 29,7 cm, handprinted offset lithograph.





SPACELOVE, exhibition poster.

SPACELOVE, exhibition poster.



 ${\bf SPACELOVE\text{-}MEMORIES\ OF\ NOW,\ 2014,\ Galerie\ Arsenal,\ Poznan\ (POL)}.$ 





SPACELOVE-MEMORIES OF NOW, 2014, Galerie Arsenal, Poznan (POL).

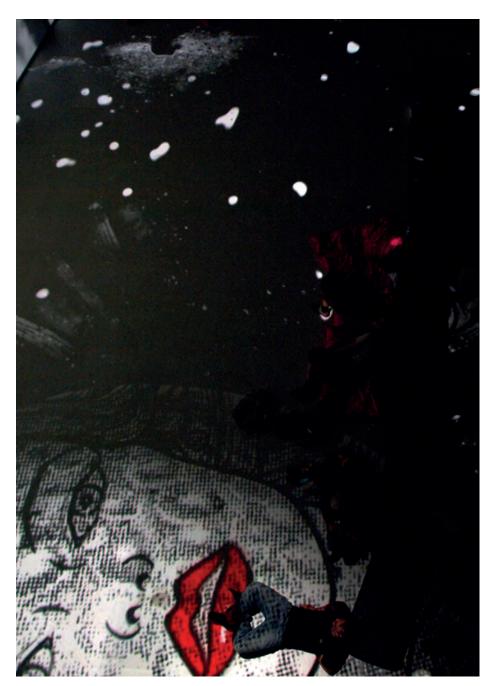




SPACELOVE, 2018, Galerie Karin Sachs, Munich (DEU).

#### **MEMORIES OF NOW**

Michaela Konrad Daniel Dorobantu Eugen Neacsu



MEMORIES OF NOW, 2011, Ars Electronica Festival Linz (AUT).

#### **MEMORIES OF NOW**

Michaela Konrad Daniel Dorobantu Eugen Neacsu

MEMORIES OF NOW is the result of the encounter between the graphic platform of the SPACELOVE cycle by Michaela Konrad and the sound structures conceived by Daniel Dorobantu. For the opening of her solo exhibition COMIC IMPACTS ART at the Art Museum Timisoara, Michaela Konrad selected Daniel Dorobantu and Eugen Neacsu alias VJ Burger for the live performance from a number of Romanian electronic musicians. Daniel Dorobantu composed the track SPACELOVE specifically for this occasion.

From this first collaboration, the idea of a joint multimedia project developed, which premiered in spring 2010 as part of the Nextcomic Festival at the Deep Space of the Ars Electronica Center.

MEMORIES OF NOW is an audio-visual creation designed to be perceived by the viewer as an autonomous installation, as a live performance, as an animation or anywhere between these areas. It generates multi-channel, audio-visual elements that are interpreted as comic stories by the audience — aided by the need of the human brain to create context.

Utilising generative techniques and real-time interventions, MEMORIES OF NOW becomes a constantly changing experience. The installation creates a multi-layered comic story that goes far beyond the linear narrative common in storytelling, inviting viewers to create their own version of the story.

The intermedia project by Daniel Dorobantu and Michaela Konrad, first shown at the Deep Space area of the Ars Electronica Center Linz as part of the Nextcomic Festival 2010, takes the comic book genre from the social to the existential without sacrificing its visual power.

The sound installation interacts with a specially designed DVD projection, which takes up, animates and interprets the graphic material, based on the generative principles of sound design. In addition, a VJ performance accompanies the auto-generative flow of sound by experimentally improvising with the range of images. This creates various tonal and visual narrative streams for the audience on several projection surfaces.

The installation creates a metamorphic sound atmosphere, an extremely wide, non-repetitive dome of sound. The visitors immerse themselves in a special sound experience. The unique Deep Space format opens up a new dimension in the reception of digital art. Capturing the particular spatial properties, the Deep Space becomes a stage for contemplative or interactive picture and sound universes.

#### **MEMORIES OF NOW**

Cross-media collaboration.

#### **MEMORIES OF NOW 1**

Video, 30 min

2010

Shown at the Deep Space of the Ars Electronica Centres as a live performance with visual and auditive real-time interventions.

#### **MEMORIES OF NOW 2**

Video, 30 min

2011

Shown at the Deep Space of the Ars Electronica Centres as a live performance with visual and auditive real-time interventions and as a multi-media installation.

#### MEMORIES OF NOW 3 THE SPIRIT OF THE POSITRON

Video, 30 min

2011

Shown as a live performance, part of the Ars Electronica Festival ORIGIN and as a multi-media installation.

#### MEMORIES OF NOW 4 TRANSSYMBOL EXPRESS

Video, 30 min

2012

Shown as a live performance, part of the Ars Electronica Festival ORIGIN within the Nextcomic-Festival.





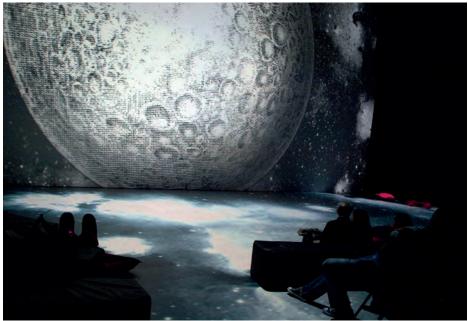
MEMORIES OF NOW, 2011, Ars Electronica Festival Linz (AUT).





MEMORIES OF NOW, 2011, Ars Electronica Festival Linz (AUT).





MEMORIES OF NOW, 2011, Ars Electronica Festival Linz (AUT).





MEMORIES OF NOW, 2011, Ars Electronica Festival Linz (AUT).



MEMORIES OF NOW, 2011, Ars Electronica Festival Linz (AUT).

#### **ON THE BEACH**

Michaela Konrad Eugen Neacsu Octavian Horvath



Michaela Konrad Eugen Neacsu Octavian Horvath

Pablo Picasso, one of the greatest artists of the last century, was also a huge fan of comics. As a recipient in the 1940s, he regularly exchanged the contents of his wastebasket for comics from the USA. And he depicted many figures with a humorous comic character. But he never fully committed to the medium.

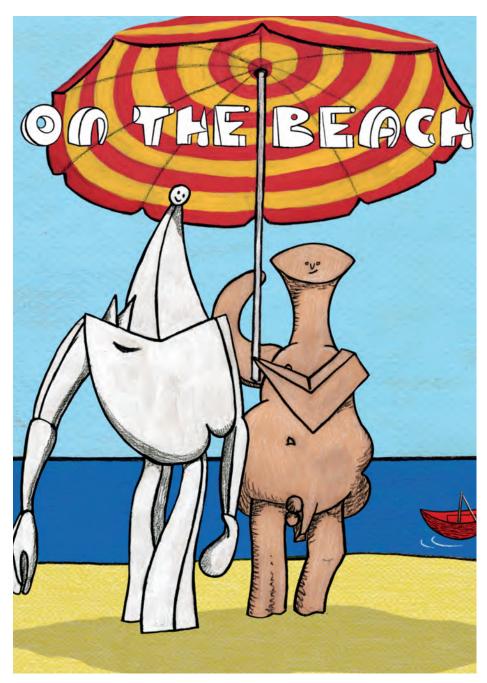
The only thing I regret in my life is that I never drew a comic.

Pablo Picasso

Picasso's *On the Beach*, his 1937 *Bathers with a Toy Boat*, with all its sexual innuendos becomes the starting point for a comic animation. It shows a voyeur trying to get close to two naked women on the beach with the help of a toy boat. Michaela Konrad establishes this scenery and adds more of Picasso's figures. For example, a pointed, female figure, borrowed from a painting that can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, or two bathing women whose bodies have special characteristics: they have two faces, one real face and a second — depicted using breasts, navel and genitalia ...

In this way, well-known and less well-known works of Picasso are literally brought to life and together tell a charming story about people's hunt for love and the object of their desire.

In ON THE BEACH – a homage to Pablo Picasso – Michaela Konrad is responsible for the story, the drawings and the animation, Eugen Neacsu for the animation and the effects and Octavian Horvath for the sound design.

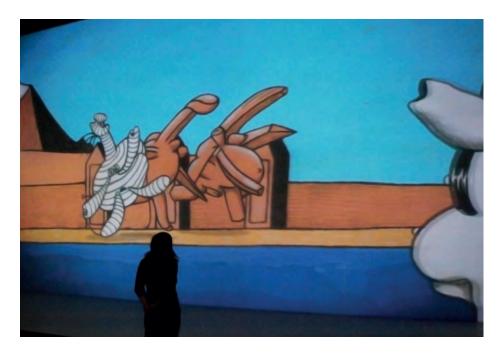


ON THE BEACH, 2013, cover, detail, gouache und crayon on paper.

#### **ON THE BEACH**

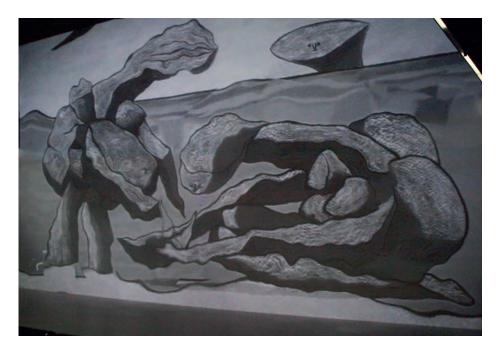
Comic animation, 07 min 30 s 60 sheets, gouache, chalk and India ink on paper various sizes 2013/2015. First shown

at the Deep Space of the Ars Electronica Center, 2013, Linz (AUT).



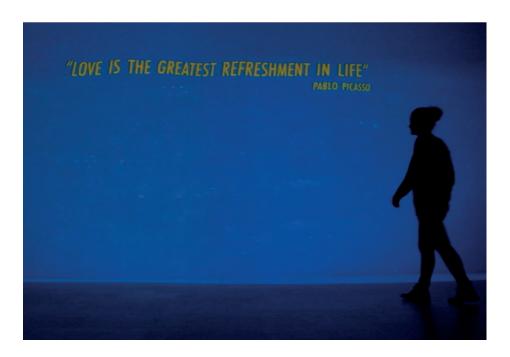


ON THE BEACH, 2013, Deep Space, Ars Electronica Center, Linz (AUT).



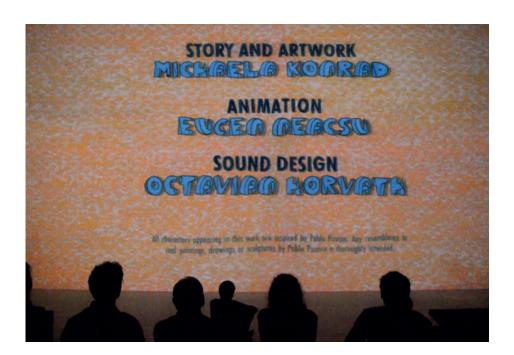


ON THE BEACH, 2013, Deep Space, Ars Electronica Center, Linz (AUT).



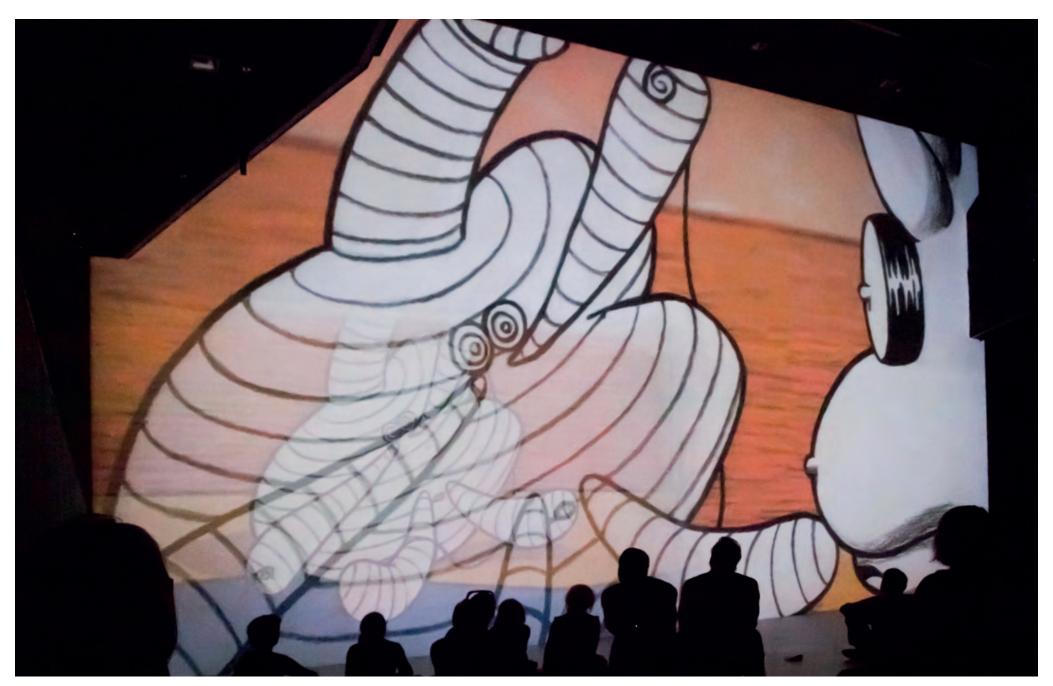


ON THE BEACH, 2013, Deep Space, Ars Electronica Center, Linz (AUT).





ON THE BEACH, 2013, Deep Space, Ars Electronica Center, Linz (AUT).



ON THE BEACH, 2013, Deep Space, Ars Electronica Center, Linz (AUT).

#### **IMPRINT**

Michaela Konrad Schönbrunnerstraße 106/6 1050 Vienna, Austria michaelakonrad.com spacelove.at

