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# JÜRGEN KLAUKE

**CENTRO DE ARTES VISUALES FUNDACIÓN HELGA DE ALVEAR**  
31 March 2017 to 11 February 2018

## JÜRGEN KLAUKE

Permeated with the spirit of experimentation that was so strong in the 1970s, Jürgen Klauke (Kliding, Germany, 1943) broke onto the art scene with his extravagant work that, as time went by, became formally more refined and elegant and acquired a more serious existential tone. However, it never lost its coherence or its condition as an *art of resistance*, nor did it succumb to any kind of artistic instrumentalization.

This exhibition offers a group of photographs and drawings belonging to the Helga de Alvear Collection and created between 1972 and 2003. Together with videos of some of his most significant performances, these works offer a route through major moments in the artist's career.

The works from the 1970s show how Klauke, in a provocative way and with a certain dose of humour, approached photography with the lack of inhibition needed to free it from its history, conventions and documentary nature, reclaiming for it its own space, that of a constructed reality which, as an autonomous medium, can create.

At that time, very close to body art and at the limits of performance and cinematographic sequentiality, he opted for self-representation –making the author and the object one and the same– in order to question the cultural and social parameters that condition individual identity; at the same time he was traversing the paths, at that time unexplored, of practices on gender and identity. Using photographs characterized by grotesque masks and provocative props, inspired by the glam aesthetic that was strong in the popular culture of the period, Klauke transformed himself into the *other*. By making himself into the projected surface of multiple identities, or to put it another way, by becoming an image, he set up an identity that expanded and became free and fluid, which would never again be absolute and stable, but could be constructed individually and that was, therefore, uncertain.

From 1980 onwards, the image of the artist continued to be the medium, but its focus of attention shifted to the transformations that the artist experiences in contact with the outside world and its socio-cultural and political changes. So, the photographs of the series *Very de nada* (1984) draw on the conventions of staged photography, the *tableau vivant* and the large format in order to return us, by means of the inversion of roles of observer and observed, to the context of the media and the new technologies, characterized by exhibition and voyeuristic observation. In precise and almost ritual choreographies, the performers observe us with binoculars and photograph us with their cameras, while, at the same time, they are observed by the viewer; the individual 'I' is accompanied, constantly and shamelessly, by the collective.

The same aesthetic production that focuses on the concentrated gesture, on restraint, on silence and which formally feeds on a tension between black and white, against a neutral background as a reflection of the existential space, is present in *Heimspiel* (1990-1992). Man and woman,

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merged under a dark cloth, restate the subject of the androgynous as a timeless sculptural volume; here, however, it is displaced towards the sphere of human relations –the table as a scenario of life– and their isolation in a world that has become strange. *Finale* (1992-1993), in its attempt to go beyond the limits of the visible, to show the inside of the external world, deals with the ghostly nature that lies beneath the apparent splendour of media images in today's consumer society.

Throughout the exhibition there is a theme: the tension that results from the coexistence of the elegant and the absurd in a scene, from attending to the essential and what is hardly insinuated, from restlessness and calm, which lets us discern what is unutterable and urges the viewer to perceive the unrepresentable, that existential complexity, that dissociation between us and the world or, as Jürgen Klauke would say, "the inadequacy of existence" that inevitably leads to the "beauty of failure".

## JÜRGEN KLAUKE

Kliding, Germany, 1943

Lives and works in Cologne, Germany

After he trained in graphic arts at the Kölner Werkschulen—the Cologne School of Art and Design—between 1964 and 1970, Klauke became a key figure in the 1970s art world and a reference point for young artists. Klauke was a pioneer in the use of his own body as the subject of his work—thus linking him with Body Art—, of photography as an independent artistic discipline, and of the principles of procedural and conceptual art. He consequently worked on different supports, notably drawing, photographic series of auto-performances and photo-sequences, performance and video. In his first work there is a critical, humorous or provocative, gaze that questions the male/female polarity and social conventions on gender, and then it was expanded to social, cultural and political phenomena. The radical nature of the image breaks, with the same force, visual conventionalisms and social prejudices, compelling viewers to rethink inheritances and to question their own existence in terms of conflict with themselves and with the structures of the world around us.

Klauke's rapid rise to success is evident in his participation in events such as *documenta* (1977) – where he was exhibited again in the 8 edition, in 1987 –, the Sidney Biennial or Performance Biennial, Munich (1979), and the Venice Biennial (1980). Among important solo exhibitions, mainly held in Germany, are those at: the Städtisches Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf (1980); Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, y Kunstmuseum Luzern (1981); Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz (1982); Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, and the Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (1986); the Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and the Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1987), the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, and the Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf (1992); Kunsthalle Bielefeld (1994); The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, The Museum of Modern Art, Shiga, The Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, Yamaguchi (1997); the Museum für moderne und zeitgenössische Kunst, Salzburg (2000); the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der BRD, Bonn, and The State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg (2001); Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2002); the Museum Moderner Kunst, Passau (2006); the ZKM, Karlsruhe, and the Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg, Salzburg (2010), and the Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR (2017). In 2013 won the Cologne Fine Art Prize.

It is also important to highlight his work as a teacher, starting in 1980 at the Hamburg Hochschule für Bildende Künste. He continued at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich (1982-1983), at Kassel's Gesamthochschule (1986) and at the Universität Gesamthochschule in Essen (1988-1993). Finally, he taught at the Kunsthochschule für Medien in Cologne, where he worked as photography lecturer from 1994 to 2008.

### [technical details](#)

**EXHIBITION:** JÜRGEN KLAUKE

**ORGANIZED BY:** Fundación Helga de Alvear

**WITH THE COLLABORATION OF:** Junta de Extremadura, Ayuntamiento de Cáceres, Diputación Provincial de Cáceres y Universidad de Extremadura.

**dates:** 31 March 2017 to 11 February 2018

**works:** 27 works of art: 18 photographs, 7 videos performances and 2 drawings and 1 documentary.

### [list of works:](#)



#### *Illusion*

1972

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

62 x 141 cm [total]

60 x 45 cm (x 3)

Edition 2/3



#### *Physiognomien*

1972-1973

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

62 x 412 cm [total]

60 x 50 cm (x 8)

Edition 2/3

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*Transformer*  
1973  
C-print on paper  
120 x 100 cm  
Edition 2/3



*Transformer*  
1973  
C-print on paper  
120 x 100 cm  
Edition 2/3



*Transformer*  
1973  
C-print on paper  
120 x 100 cm  
Edition 2/3



*Eine Ewigkeit ein Lächeln*  
1973  
C-print on paper  
31 x 369 cm [total]  
30 x 40 cm (x 9)  
Edition P.A. II/II



*Aussicht/Einsicht*  
1974  
C-print on paper  
104 x 100 cm  
Edition 1/3

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*Ziggy Stardust*

1974

C-print on paper

31,5 x 249 cm [total]

30 x 40 cm (x 6)

Edition P.A. I / II



*Kommt Gut*

1984

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 360 cm [total]

80 x 120 cm (x 3)

Edition 2/3



*Besprechung*

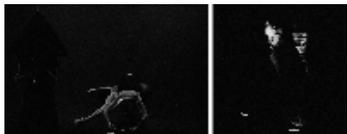
1984

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 240 cm [total]

80 x 120 cm (x 2)

Edition 2/3



*Ziemlich*

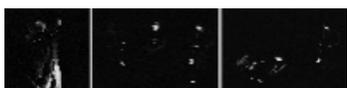
1984

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 200 cm [total]

80 x 120 cm (x 1); 80 x 80 cm (x 1)

Edition 2/3



*Lösung*

1984

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 320 cm [total]

80 x 120 cm (x 2); 80 x 80 cm (x 1)

Edition 2/3

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*Übermorgen*

1984

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 320 cm [total]

80 x 120 cm (x 2); 80 x 80 cm (x 1)

Edition 2/3

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*Mit Sich und der Welt*

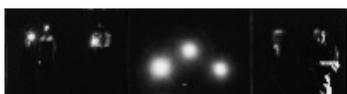
1984

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 120 cm

Edition 2/3

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*Bewusstseinerweiterung I*

1986

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

80 x 320 cm [total]

80 x 120 cm (x 2); 80 x 80 cm (x 1)

Edition 2/3

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*Heimspiel I*

1990-1992

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

125 x 180 cm

Edition 1/3

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*Heimspiel II*

1990-1992

Silver gelatin b/w photograph on paper

125 x 180 cm

Edition 1/3

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*Finale*

1992-1993

C-print on paper

240 x 180 cm (x 3)

Edition 1/3

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*Dichtung*

1996  
Watercolour on paper  
150 x 120 cm



*Phantomenpfindung*

2003  
Watercolour and mixed technique on paper  
157 x 126 cm



*Aspekt – Die Wörter haben ihre Kraft verloren*

1977  
U-matic video transferred to digital, color, stereo  
sound  
32' 54''



*The Harder They Come III*

1978  
U-matic video transferred to digital, b/w, stereo sound  
16' 12''



*Made in Germany. Hinsetzen / Asteh'n / Ich liebe Dich.  
Ein Dialog*

1978  
U-matic video transferred to digital, b/w, stereo sound  
22' 14''



*Lachen – Weinen*

1978  
Analog video transferred to digital, color, stereo sound  
5' 05''

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*Eimer live*

1979/1980

Analog video transferred to digital, color, stereo sound  
7' 25''



*Jede Gesellschaft hat die Kultur, die sie verdient*

1984

Analog video transferred to digital, color, stereo sound  
1' 55''



*In der Tat*

1985

U-matic video transferred to digital, color, stereo  
sound  
21' 33''



*Freischwinger: Das desaströse Ich des Jürgen Klauke*

2001

Documentary film produced by Heinz Peter Schwerfel  
Transferred to DVD, color, stereo sound  
45'

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To download press images [click here](#)

## activities:

### GUIDED VISITS

#### Groups

Tuesday to Friday, 10:00-13:00

Groups maximum of 30

#### General Guided Visits

First Thursday of the month, 18:00

#### Monographic Guided Visits

Every Thursday in the middle of month,

18:00

#### Thematic Guided Visits

Last Thursday of the month, 18:00

### CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

#### Groups

Tuesday to Friday, 10:00-13:00

Groups maximum of 20

#### Open

Saturday, 12:30

Groups maximum of 20

All activities are free of charge and do not require advance booking, with the only exception of Group Visits and Workshops which must be reserved at least 10 days in advance.

### [address](#)

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### [opening hours](#)

**October 1 to May 31, Tuesday to Saturday: 10:00-14:00 / 17:00-20:00**

**June 1 to September 30, Tuesday to Saturday: 10:00-14:00 / 18:00-21:00**

**Sunday: 10:00-14:30**

Closed on Mondays except festive days and national bank holidays, as well as day 1 January, 27 May and 25 December and the afternoon of 24 and 31 December.

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