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HAMBURGER BAHNHOF –
MUSEUM FÜR GEGENWART – BERLIN
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EXHIBITION
19.03. – 19.09.2021

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PRESS RELEASE

Meat, skin, wax, confetti, blood, intestines, odours, senses, smoke, ritual, alcohol, excess, touch, singing, fat and ashes: these are some of the soft, rough, gentle, and coarse materials artist Pauline Curnier Jardin employs in her works. The winner of the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2019 is presenting the extensive video installation “Fat to Ash-es”, which she produced for her first institutional solo exhibition in Germany, in the historic halls of Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin.

Jardin’s cinematic and installative language often adopts myth-like narratives, which she deconstructs and disrupts. “Fat to Ashes” combines three cinematic snapshots: a religious festival in honour of Saint Agatha; the slaughter of a pig; and the Cologne Carnival. Thereby the exhibition’s title denotes the week of excess that runs from so-called “Fat Thursday” or “Giovedì grasso” and known as “Weiberfastnacht” or “Fettdonnerstag” in German, until Ash Wednesday which marks the day reality sets back in and Lent begins according to the Christian Calendar. Jardin shows these three spheres of activity as places of transgression and transformation which bring societal functions originating in cult rituals into the present: those of congregating together, performative display, and the exuberant abandonment of prevailing mores.

An Italian dessert, for example, which recreates the shape of a breast and is eaten on the feast day commemorating the martyrdom of Saint Agatha. The slaughter of the pig takes place far from industrial factory-farming on a traditional rural farm. The images of the Cologne Carnival, on the other hand, are full of life. Looking back at the carnival events, the festivities read like a last great collective debauchery just before COVID would lead to a country-wide lockdown, as people viewing the film today now know. A broad amphitheatre encompasses the video installation as the centre of the spectacle, and thus transformations, processions, and practised performance in ritualised excess are the content and formal attributes of Pauline Curnier Jardin’s “Fat to Ashes”.

A catalogue in German and English will be published to mark the exhibition, with contributions by Pauline Curnier Jardin, Sara Giannini, Ana Teixeira Pinto, Kristina Schrei and Giovanna Zapperi.

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Please note that until further notice there will be **special entry and health regulations** in our museums due to COVID: the number of visitors is restricted to take our occupancy limits into account. All visitors above 6 years of age are required to wear a mouth and nose covering, to maintain a minimum distance of 1.5 meters from others, to follow the posted tour routes, and to avoid forming groups in the rooms. Entrance is only possible with a timed-entry ticket, which may be booked in advance online: www.smb.museum/tickets