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Artist: Christine Wang Venue: A Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne Exhibition Title: A Coronavirus Memes Date: September 5 to November 7, 2020 Click here to view slideshow Full gallery of images, press release and link available after the jump. Images: Images courtesy of Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne Press Release: Christine Wang's canvases manifest fleeting outbursts of collective creativity. In her works she deals with cyberculture, internet phenomena and digital imagery. Her acrylic colors shimmer like RGB, they transfer pixels back into physical space. For her fifth solo exhibition at Galerie Nagel Draxler, she is copying collected visual material from Instagram: Memes. The meme (from the Greek mimeme) is itself an imitation, its reproduction is part of the narration. Images are overlaid with texts, in humorous production they strive for lulz [1], the mercenary, malicious joy of the user. Supposedly simplified, these pictorial worlds of Web 2.0 are placed in ever new contexts, appropriating the most up-to-date narratives and developing their own complexity under the speed of a blink of an eye. Away from scrolling, swiping and typing, Christine Wang allows us to take a closer look at this memplex. She generates a snapshot, enlarges it and, through the act of naming, transforms it into a historical moment, a testimony, a short-lived reactions. Contrary to the viewing habits that usually accompany memes, the viewers of the "Coronavirus Memes" stand in front of the size, sometimes even cinematic motifs and have to relocate their own position. The pictures are dealing with the economic devastation brought on by the pandemic in the US. The complex of themes ranges from mask wearing, unemployment, Coronavirus and current US health policy. Whether a reality TV star (Kim Kardashian, 2020), a jellyfish painter (Eliott Ross, 2020) or a comic figure (Gooni Movies, 2020), the protagonists in the picture macros [2] once posed for other narratives. It is common for such a picture to be reappropriated, but within it to convey the same feelings and intentions. Thus, the actor Kayode Ewumi a.k.a. Roll Safe from the web series "Hood Documentaries" discovers a dangerous logic: You can't count all cases of coronavirus / if you don't test for coronavirus. Here, as in the numerous other digital versions, the failure of a critical thought is mocked. With a Roll Safe of Digital Blackface in the Age of Racial Violence (2020) the artist draws attention to a problem that is a not to be neglected consequence of the poor decision-making of white supremacists, especially in the USA, but also in Germany. Violence against BIPOC [3] and socially disadvantaged people manifests itself in neglected or too expensive health care policies ("Hospital Bills", 2020), as well as in non-solidary behavior, e.g. when shopping for grocery shopping ("Yellow Suits Meme", 2020). Half a year after the outbreak of the virus in Europe, Christine Wang gives us a mirror in which we recognize our own cultural and humorous approach to pandemic dangers, rediscover our economic and social fears and through which we see ourselves in the responsibility to act precautionary to protect ourselves and others "with hygiene, humor and culture. The artist evokes time-consuming photorealist paint layers. The large scale, invites us to bring the visual arguments of far-reaching digital culture into the gallery. A Luz describes malicious laughter at the expense of other macros are one of the most common forms of Internet Memes. The post Christine Wang at Galerie Nagel Draxler (after Jasper Johns) Date: September 5 to October 10, 2020 Crousel, Paris. Photos by Martin Argyroglo. Press Release weaving, Aubusson rugs displayed on walls and floors will geographical maps referring to the ones Jasper Johns has creating both echo and tension, eternally engraved. Rirkrit Tiravanija: I know, and that's working with the flag in other materials. In a way, for me this were protesting Ronald Reagan's invasion of Central America that in sports broadcastings the American flag was shown to announce breaks and then dissolved when the game restarted. She isolated that moment and inserted it into her video collage. J.S.: In 1989 she also made a huge scandal. But people forget that it is part of political speech, part of enacting your right to critique. Of course, the political rights were up in arms and finding any excuse to defund the arts, not realizing that they were chipping away at their own idea of freedom of speech, of the system and whole constitutionality. So, this idea of deconstructing the flag has been going on since the 1980s, since Ronald Reagan. Or even for longer, since the Vietnam war protests. Of course, as an artist thinking about the flag you also have to think about who has worked with the flag before. Obviously Johns has done it most prominently. J.S.: But there is a difference between working about and deconstructing the flag and working with a Jasper Johns painting of the flag. R.T.: Johns was doing a Duchampian readymade. This is what I think is interesting about it, using the flag as a readymade. At the same time it was also a pop icon. Pop Art basically is readymade art. Just that it is about using imagery rather than using objects. J.S.: Johns chose motives such as the flag or the map for their iconic status "for being something the mind already knows," as Johns once said about the American flag. They are graspable on the spot, but the way they are painted invites the viewer to inspect them more consciously. For your works in the show you have matched these visual icons with slogans. How do you understand the relationship between these two kinds of information? R.T.: I usually describe my text works as road signs. Like when you drive on a highway and you drive by a big signage and pick up whatever the words are written on it. It's about whether that gets into your consciousness or not. When you wear t-shirts in Northern Thailand you drive through the forest and all of a sudden you find a little piece of wood nailed to a tree with a text written on it, usually in Thai. Most of the time it's a message from Christian missionaries. I always find it interesting how they suddenly show up in the middle of nowhere, totally out of context. You read it because it stands out, and it does have some effect, whether you agree with it or not. I'm interested in this floating attention "that and the phenomenon of so many people running around wearing t-shirts not realizing what it says on them, at least in Japan or in Thailand. I find that kind of parallel to each other. J.S.: You have worked with t-shirts as carriers of slogans invented or chosen by you. More prominently, you have also placed them over canvases covered with pages from daily newspapers. How are these works related to what you just said? R.T.: Again, there's layers of information. When I look at this work I'm looking for the information that is referred back to in the text in the front. J.S.: The newspapers and to the t-shirts. Yes, there are the old news in the newspapers, and reading them in relation to the texts changes the meaning. It demands more time than grasping the slogans. Similar to how in your demonstration drawings invites the viewer to look at the images more time and attention, even if there are a hundred of them grouped together. Does it also work the other way around? Isn't it that in combination with the newspapers the interesting to think about how the meaning of the news changes as we recontextualize them in different historical situations. I work with slogans coming from different times. "The Days of this Society is Numbered" or even a painting to marble? R.T.: Well, it could be more interesting if it were actually put out in a graveyard. I find it interesting why it is saying that. It's about you normally read on tombstones, Duchamp even wrote his own epitaph: "D'ailleurs, c'est toujours les autres qui meurent." (Besides, it's always the other people who die). While preparing for this conversation I came across an article from 1964 in which Max Kozloff writes about the relationship between Johns and Duchamp. In one passage he sums up the conversation in a way that I was particularly struck by this one sentence, quote: "For one thing, in each instance the object is overpainted, or functions or relates directly to a pictorial passage. Johns, after all, takes the temperance of a painting, not marble blocks and so on. Are your flags reversing Johns as Johns reversed Duchamp? And if so, in what way?" (Kozloff) I didn't know this passage. But you are right, in a way

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