

c Laser ALL FIRES

er's best work examines how politics, technology, psy-
dia are used to manage and calibrate human impulses
. Consisting of two recent projects produced for Euro-
s, *In Real Life*, 2019, and *Handle/Poignée*, 2018, this
ted the centrality of analysis and passé pseudoscientific
x infographics and cyberpunks, modernism and New
practice. Perhaps the latter interest accounted for the
ess that haunted both works, whose investments in
mentation and technological mediation—"progress"—
nparisons to a "before."

née, for example—a performance and video first devel-
tre Pompidou in Paris—might be described as a utopian
authoritative personality types through therapeutic
Within a color-coded stage set shaped like a Venn dia-
nent Consultants" dressed in multicolored bodysuits
oret four personalities outlined in George Lakoff's 1996
Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think. Their
e the energies each personality invests in home, work,
convey the shifts in authority or dissent that might take
therein. With its many reference points—shamanic
ate consulting, parenting styles, relations between
ld leaders, and personality tests administered to Centre
ors, to name a few—the work nevertheless retains an
lgia for progressive tropes of the prior century (think
n, Carl Jung, Maria Montessori, et al.).



on the other hand, more precisely locates the economic
e our twenty-first-century reality. Commissioned by the
Art and Creative Technology, a Liverpool nonprofit,
video installation follows five freelance workers from
be as they attempt to improve their work/life habits.
with a life coach and a spiritual adviser through a regi-
-oriented program designed by Laser, a "30 Day Biohack
t makes use of health apps, wearable devices, daily
diets. The self-improvement plan for Zahid, a twenty-
-designer from Pakistan, involves trying circadian-rhythm
nally skipping his daily call to prayer to meet deadlines,
tasks to manage his energy during Ramadan. *Not long*
ute video, it is revealed that these five people—a script-

writer, a voice-over artist, a whiteboard animator, a social-media-
content writer, and a graphic designer—are professionals in the very
techniques required to produce the artwork itself. That is, they were
hired by Laser for their production skills and became both the subjects
of the video and the keys to its completion.

More documentary than reality-TV show, this fascinating study of
the globalized gig economy is differentiated as "art" through its ambi-
tions of institutional critique. That is, the work points to the means and
conditions of its own production and circulation. It recalls some of
the best media-oriented Conceptual works of the past decade or so—
Christopher Williams's real-time cooking show *Supplement*, 2003;
Hito Steyerl's clever ode to surveillance, *How Not to be Seen: A Fuck-
ing Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013; and Harun Farocki's inves-
tigation of gamer space, *Parallel I–IV*, 2012–14. Laser's recent work
shows there is still much to be extrapolated from our all-too-human
attempts to quantify life in late capitalism—and, yes, even from those
efforts to organize life in the twentieth century.

—Catherine Taft

Christine Frerichs

KLOWDEN MANN

Christine Frerichs's "interior portraits" are diminutive, closely observed
paintings on paper that frame her home and studio, sites of domesticity
and labor. They are much smaller than the canvases on which she has
often worked, whose larger scales summon landscapes and climates
as well as emotions. Indeed, she began making the pieces shown here
under the exhibition title "Viewfinder" in 2018 as interim composi-
tions of light and mood, adjacent to the other work; they are now a
project of their own, an ongoing chronicle of place and a mnemonic
device for the things—often exterior—that come to be stored in the
home. They likewise record how insistently and unavoidably political
such materials are. Each portrait is specific, almost performatively so:
The news today, 2018, closes in on Frerichs's living room, where a
potted plant sits on a coffee table, a tufted chair rests before a book-
shelf stuffed with art books and display objects, and a television none
too subtly broadcasts the Brett Kavanaugh hearings (the text along the
bottom reads PROTESTERS INTERRUPT SENATE VOTE). *Orange ranuncu-
lus, pink tulip, fertility test*, 2019, highlights nothing but the titular
items, blooming under an open time-stamped laptop that provides a
crepuscular glow.

Some aspects of this project are more evidently continuous with
Frerichs's earlier paintings. *Finding the middle*, 2018, depicts a wall
drawing of a standing figure radiating concentric lines that reiterate the
figure-eight form that the artist often uses to organize largely abstract
compositions made of thick oil paint, acrylic, and wax. As an exhibi-
tion, "Viewfinder" also carried forward the intention of the painting
Viewfinder, 2012–14, which references framing devices imbricated
within the histories and conventions of imagemaking, in this instance
a rectangular hole cut into a stiff sheet of paper that Frerichs also used
to compose and paint what was shown here under its sign. Like *View-
finder*, which punctures surface with aperture—the real material act
affording an illusionistic vista—the newer paintings often feature
portals and pictures of pictures. In *Truman Show*, 2019, an image
hovers on a TV; *View from the kitchen to the studio*, 2018, highlights
a hall of framed art; *Open Tulip*, 2018, alights on postcards and
ephemera tacked to a wall (these are the sources for still other repre-
sentations, mediated and translational).

Frerichs begins these works with stream-of-consciousness writing;
she then turns the page over and starts making other kinds of marks.



Christine Frerichs.
The news today, 2018,
oil, graphite, and
wax on paper,
16 1/4 x 12 1/2".

know that this moment, this arrangement of things, is somehow significant over all others?" In response, Frerichs points out the handheld nature of the viewfinder and the "entirely personal" selection process it requires. Her paintings are always partial views of her authored space—iterations of selfhood.

—Suzanne Hudson

Erin Calla Watson and Haena Yoo

AS IT STANDS

A tiny sculpture, resembling both an amulet and a mini crucifix, contained an image of a dog's mutilated body, laser-etched into a heart-shaped hunk of dark crystal—the kind you might find at a Mexican five-and-dime around Valentine's Day. The stone was attached to a rough-hewn pewter cast of a tongue depressor. Similarly crafted objects nearby depicted a nude woman holding her hand out to a dog and a row of bikini-clad models waiting to jump off a diving board.

These and other enigmatic works by Erin Calla Watson were on view in her two-person exhibition with Haena Yoo at *As It Stands*. Watson's earlier pieces drew on the artist's archive of her *Playboy* modeling days: Her photos were printed on ties and beach towels and other made-to-order goods in wry send-ups of consumerism and desire. Here, she turned from herself and complicated the critique. Watson tried to explain to me how the images in these sculptures—including one titled *A Dogpill*, 2019, depicting a woman in a bridal veil being mounted from behind by a pit bull—were pulled by algorithms used to cover up child-pornography searches with other pictures, many equally fucked up. I'm still not sure how it works. The term *dogpill* is shorthand for a tenet of incel gospel: that women who don't want to have sex with incels must simply be more interested in having sex with dogs.

The works' chilling effects were heightened by Yoo's contributions, notably two Plexiglas shelves that supported neat rows of clear-plastic bags vacuum-sealing what looked like plops of vomit, or some similarly variegated collection of effluvia. The contents were, in fact, mixtures

Hidden, bracketed between public-facing apparition and institutional support, these jottings remain animating forces whose effects are felt even at a distance. (For a scheduled event during the show's run, the artist pulled the paintings down and read the inscriptions on the back to those gathered.) An interview between Frerichs and one of her former teachers, the Los Angeles artist Charles Long, provides another lens onto Frerichs's process. In their conversation, which was made available at the gallery, Long connects Frerichs's makeshift viewfinder—which forces the eye to focus on one arbitrary thing—to the idea of the ready-made, which makes it possible to understand whatever appears before you as an aesthetic: "It's almost like a roulette wheel. Like, where does this thing stop? And when it stops, how do we

of lady-centric herbs and cosmetics—maggots and Marc Jacobs perfume, arrowroot, clear lines of the display contrasted starkly with what the hell results from all the promise of salves and creams I've put in and on my body who teased me about my smorgasbord of beauty to them collectively as "perfect creams." Even a new one, he'd smile and say, "Is this the one?"

Yoo's other, central work, *The Birth of Venus*, rectangular wooden dais on the floor populated with makeup products, all either trapped in little plastic bags connected by clear tubes, or in slumped plastic bags connected by clear tubes of newspapers, photographs, and other ephemera in wider contexts. A page torn from Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1978) was plastered down next to a hunk of wood resembling a diseased heart; liquids, vitamins, creams spilled out of a clear tube. Sontag: "TO, NOT JUST BECAUSE THE DISEASE IS (OR IS NOT), BUT BECAUSE IT IS FELT TO BE ON THE MEANING OF THAT WORD: ILL-OMENED, AND THE SENSES. A little Venus of Willendorf on a platform, watching over it all.

According to the press release, the piece was a mother's fight with cancer, though the chance had been the game board for a homemade, alienating pairing this narrative with an opaque, game-like *Venus* riffs on the imperative to craft one's identity, also "beating" the disease. Incorporating a vacuum suggests this can only be achieved through a process of delusional.

The alchemy between these two, ahem, is exponentially more caliginous theme than either individually. As someone who, in response to a breakup, grew out her hair, put on gobs of lipstick, and took C pills in her mouth (as if sexiness could cure more than the scent of Estée Lauder's *Sensuelle* surrounding Watson's talismans—the discarded, one's body as an exploitable image and even a sack of fluids. We often juggle both feelings.

