

SILKE SCHÖNFELD

You Can't  
Make  
Up This

12.10.24 - 02.02.25

Work descriptions  
+ floor plan

EN

Silke Schönfeld:  
*You Can't Make This Up*  
12 October 2024 – 2 February 2025

An exhibition by HMKV

**HMKV**  
Hartware MedienKunstVerein

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# You Can't Make This Up

*You Can't Make This Up* is a fitting title for Silke Schönfeld's solo exhibition at HMKV. Her films are political reflections that often take place in unexpected spatial and temporal contexts, seamlessly moving between documentary and fiction. As filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard once wrote, the difference between objective documentary film and art is a matter of *involvement*: 'As soon as you are interested, fiction is in play.' And the fact that Schönfeld is interested becomes immediately clear when watching her films. They are about humanity—including our own.

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*You Can't Make This Up*  
Schönfeld's works interweave personal stories with historical and social contexts. For her, the appeal of the documentary form is that it allows her to reveal the general or common within the specific. A participant observer, she focuses on people, be they individuals or social groups. Her films do not claim to be all-encompassing, but rather focus on subtle social phenomena and on structures shaped by communities.

The exhibition *You Can't Make This Up* comprises five large-format video installations from the last five years, one of which is a new production that was created specifically for this occasion and is shown here for the first time.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication  
(German/English).

Silke Schönfeld, b. 1988 in Idar-Oberstein,  
lives and works in Dortmund.

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*You Can't Make This Up*  
**EIN PROZENT—  
IMAGINED  
COMMUNITIES**

**Video, 8 min., 2019**

*Content Note*

The video installation focuses on right-wing extremist associations and their political goals, which include racist violence and political persecution.

'Ein Prozent für unser Land e. V.' (One Percent for Our Country) is the name of a self-proclaimed new right-wing citizens' initiative that claims to be dedicated to 'patriotic protest against the irresponsible policy of mass immigration'. Its members are being monitored by the Federal German Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

The organisation, which was founded in Oybin, Saxony, stages its 'protest actions' with emotionalising propaganda films on social media. Schönfeld went in search for clues in the analogue space, capturing the original locations of these 'protest actions' in static camera shots. In addition to the visual language, her film emphasises the New Right's rhetoric and choice of words by means of captions in the style of lexicon entries.

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*You Can't Make This Up*  
**NOTHING IN THIS  
WORLD CAN  
TAKE THE PLACE  
OF PERSISTENCE**

**Video, 24 min., 2022**

Bahnhofstraße 82 a in Herne's pedestrian zone has a turbulent history. After the first McDonald's branch in Europe opened its doors in Amsterdam in 1971, the Ruhr region soon followed suit: the Vossen family from Herne gave up their own traditional gift shop Spezialhaus Berns—Haus der Geschenke in the city's pedestrian zone and opened the first McDonald's in the Ruhr region in the summer of 1976. The furniture still speaks of what was sold here from 1976 to 2011. Since then, the 140 m<sup>2</sup> shop has been sitting empty. How will the premises be used in the future?

In the film, the empty shop, which is occasionally used as a band rehearsal room, becomes a symbol of structural change in the Ruhr region. At the same time, its history exemplifies the Americanisation of post-war West German society. Alternating documentary footage and staged scenes, the film traces the development of the location—the stories of the protagonists are interwoven with overarching themes that continue to have a strong influence on the region, from changing conceptions of work to the future of city centres and the importance of culture for the region. The film thus merges private and collective memory.

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*You Can't Make This Up*  
**NO MORE BUTTER  
SCENES**

**Video, 30 min., 2023**

*Content Note*

The video installation addresses the structural abuse of power in the film and theatre industry. Physical violence is depicted.

*No More Butter Scenes* examines the relationship between consent and intimacy in the context of the acting profession. In 2007, around 35 years after the premiere of *The Last Tango in Paris* (1972), actress Maria Schneider spoke for the first time about the sexual abuse she experienced during the filming of the infamous butter scene.

*No More Butter Scenes* uses an individual case to illustrate the psychological complexity of the relationship between victim and perpetrator. The film takes the form of a chamber play with Lola Fuchs and Mervan Ürkmez in the leading roles and is based on the format of PR interviews. Can we as the audience be the judge of the credibility of emotions? While we are thrown back on our own prejudices, the roles of victim and perpetrator are ceaselessly renegotiated between the actors.

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*You Can't Make This Up*  
**ICH DARF SIE  
IMMER ALLES  
FRAGEN**

**Video, 15 min., 2023**

*Content Note*

The documentary short film deals with the process of coping with trauma in connection with sexualized violence against children.

The cutting down of a cherry tree becomes the starting point of an intimate cinematic dialogue about transgenerational trauma between mother and daughter. The line between the need for investigation and the desire for healing becomes blurred as the camera continuously documents the chopping down of the cherry tree in the mother's garden. This short film *Ich darf sie immer alles fragen* (I May Always Ask Her Anything) is an attempt to find a common language for the unspeakable consequences of child sexual abuse within one's own family.

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*You Can't Make This Up*  
**DIE UNVORZEIG-  
BARKEIT DESSEN,  
WAS NIE HÄTTE  
GESCHEHEN  
SOLLEN**

**Video, approx. 18 min., 2024**

*Content Note*

The documentary short film uses language to address psychological and physical violence against children. One scene shows graphic violence between animals.

In this sequel to *Ich darf sie immer alles fragen* (2023), Schönfeld explores the continuities of National Socialist educational ideals in post-war German society.

'There was no "zero hour" in children's upbringing and education, either. The post-war generation of children in West Germany still experienced a fascist style of upbringing, both in the private sphere and in educational institutions. To what extent does the fact that early childhood upbringing takes place in private spaces, and is still predominantly taken on by FLINTA\*, play a role in the absence of any reckoning with National Socialist ideals of education? *Die Unvorzeigbarkeit dessen, was nie hätte geschehen sollen* (The Impossibility of Presenting That Which Should Never Have Happened) looks at the seemingly mundane traces that are still perceptible today.' (Silke Schönfeld)

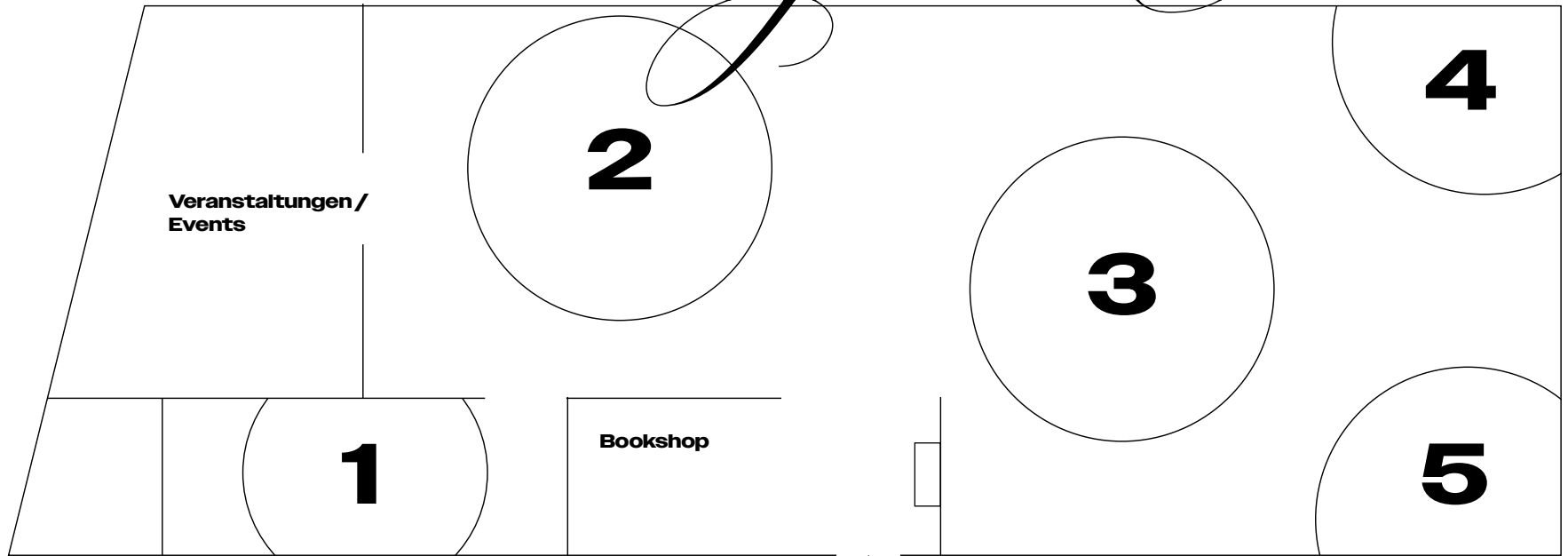
\*FLINTA\* is a German abbreviation that stands for "Frauen, Lesben, Intergeschlechtliche, nicht-binäre, trans und agender Personen", meaning women/females, lesbians, intersex, non-binary, trans and agender people – in other words, all those who are patriarchally discriminated against due to their gender identity. The asterisk is intended to include all those who do not identify with any of the letters, but who are also marginalized in a patriarchal, heteronormative society because of their gender identity.

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12.10.24-02.02.25

*You Can't*



- 1** *Ein Prozent – imagined communities* (Video, 8 Min., 2019)
- 2** *Nothing in This World Can Take the Place of Persistence* (Video, 24 Min., 2022)
- 3** *No More Butter Scenes* (Video, 30 Min., 2024)
- 4** *Ich darf sie immer alles fragen* (Video, 15 Min., 2023)
- 5** *Die Unvorzeigbarkeit dessen, was nie hätte geschehen sollen* (Video, ca. 18 Min., 2024)

↑  
**Eingang/Entrance**

**HMKV**  
Hardware MedienKunstVerein

*Have This One*