



Pause: Ericka Beckman 18–21 January 18

Opening: 17 January 18, 7 pm

To launch the first exhibition season, KW Institute for Contemporary Art presents the installation *Super-8 Trilogy* (1978–81) by the experimental filmmaker and artist Ericka Beckman as part of its ongoing series *Pause*. *Pause* focuses on individual works, which thematically connect and supplement the program's main focuses.

The presentation of *Super-8 Trilogy* marks the first encounter with the upcoming exhibition program in 2018 that investigates the human body and its



The Broken Rule, 1979

relationship to innovations in politics, technology, and architecture. Beckman's film installation is, furthermore, spatially connected to ~~Willem De Rooij's solo exhibition *Whiteout* on display at KW until early January 2018—a seating arrangement that de Rooij designed as elements of his film installation.~~

Super-8 Trilogy consists of the films *We Imitate*; *We Break Up* (1978), *The Broken Rule* (1979) and *Out of Hand* (1981), which defy classical narrative structures and follow a choreography developed through the artist's engagement with the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980). Piaget shaped research on the cognitive development of children, primarily in the field of developmental psychology, and took the view that cognitive development is accelerated by interaction with the environment. The three films explore the possibilities of play with surreal, dreamlike sequences and try to negotiate the processes of the memory, learning and symbol formation, which are triggered when we process images. For this Beckman uses strict patterns of colors, shapes and motifs—related to each other by repetition and through game-based structures.

The first film in the series *We Imitate*; *We Break Up* (1978) shows Beckman herself in the role of a schoolchild. Dressed in a school uniform consisting of a combination of a skirt, blouse, and tie, the protagonist confronts a larger than life, marionette-like puppet, trying to imitate its actions and movements. Imitation

thus becomes a playful process of self-perception and identity development.

The artist describes *The Broken Rule* (1979) as a personal reaction to the educational system in the United States of America: two teams meet on a track to compete for building blocks of education. Individual players can only ascend to the next level once the entire group achieves its goal. The object of the game is to reach the professional world at the end. While the teams are made up of only male protagonists, female cheerleaders are superimposed onto the scene, cheering on the competitors. Their repeated chants constitute the film's soundtrack, recalling that of early computer games. The film not only refers to conventional gender roles in 1970s American social life, but also highlights the competitive mechanisms that underpin such a society.



We Imitate; We Break Up, 1980

The third film in the *Super-8 Trilogy*, *Out of Hand* (1980), is about a boy that returns to an abandoned house to search for something that he left there. His method involves pursuing hidden clues spread throughout the house. Each object that the protagonist encounters in the house has diverse functions and serves to arouse memory sequences of the locations that lie dormant in his mind and helps him to navigate the space and his memory alike.

The *Super-8 Trilogy* is characterized by a Do-It-Yourself aesthetic, which is central to all of Beckman's films. By the 1970s and 80s, the artist was already able to employ the simplest analogue techniques to depict complex issues that shaped social paradigms of the time. Characteristic of her aesthetic, too, is Beckman's use of her artist friends like Matt Mullican, Mike Kelley, and James Welling in her films' roles. As a part of the so-called *Pictures Generation*, Beckman has addressed art's increasing proximity to new commercial films, television, and print magazines since the mid-1970s.

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Opening hours 18–21 January 18

Thursday 11 am–9 pm
Friday–Sunday 11 am–7 pm

Admission

5 €, reduced 3 €

Colophon

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Head of Production: Claire Spilker
Technical Management: Wilken Schade
Head of Installation and Media Technology:
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Installation Team: KW Installation Team
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