

Meredith Rosen Gallery

Meredith Rosen Gallery is pleased to present *1999*, a solo video exhibition of early work by Anna Jermolaewa. The exhibition opens on June 23 and remains on view through July 22.

Anna Jermolaewa's darkly humorous work uses staged performances of toys and household appliances to investigate commonplace socially ascribed roles, structures and relationships. The objects Jermolaewa uses are not actors standing in for human beings but rather aspects of the psyche, like a bad habit or compulsive tick. Jermolaewa's careful observation of the trappings of everyday life lend an uncanny sensibility in representing complex sexual and psychological dynamics through deceptively simple commonplace scenarios.

In the video work *Solo*, a battery-operated pink rabbit advances towards the camera, repetitively shaking a tiny bell. As the toy moves closer, it reaches the limit of the camera lens, but its mechanistic forward motion doesn't stop. The rabbit's movements become invasive, its synthetic pink fur overwhelms the screen and the toy's actions are simultaneously predatory and auto-erotic. The plush animal meets the invisible wall of screen, unable to stop, yet thwarted from moving forward. The video is looped, and the toy is caught in this seemingly endless cycle, marching toward us, but never arriving.

Also on view is *On / Off*, a video work which ironically uses the symbol of the phallus, as a signifier of power, strength, and dominance. In Jermolaewa's video, the phallus is domesticated, its sole use to operate a light switch, flicking it on and off in perpetuity. The penis becomes an actor, discarding its usual sexualized role for a rote household task. As the video loops the private sexualized body becomes routine. Rather than objectified, the naked body is rendered ordinary, functional. In a similar way, the connotations of "on" and "off" too are stripped of their power, each reappearing like clockwork.

In both works, Jermolaewa hones in on strange repetitive scenes equally disquieting. In *Solo*, a child's toy becomes a sexual predator while *On / Off* reverses this process, the symbol of the phallus is reduced to a banal tool. By slyly dissecting our prescribed associations, Jermolaewa is able to open up the symbolic potential of our social systems, revealing the fears, instincts and curiosities bound in the mundane.

Anna Jermolaewa (b. 1970 St. Petersburg, Russia) lives and works in Vienna, Austria. Jermolaewa graduated from University of Vienna with a degree in Art History in 1998 and from Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna with a degree in New Media in 2002. Her work is held in the collections of the Kunsthau Bregenz, Stedelijk Museum, Friedrich Christian Flick Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, MUMOK-Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Volpinum Kunstsammlung, MUSA, Museum auf Abruf, Vienna, Tiroler Landesmuseums Ferdinandeum, Vehbi Koc Foundation, Kontakt-The Art Collection of Erste Group, Belvedere, Landesgalerie Linz, Vienna Museum, Collection of Bank Austria, EVN Collection, Arbeiterkammer Vienna among others. Jermolaewa was a Professor for Media Art at the University of Arts and Design, Karlsruhe, Germany from 2005-2011. Jermolaewa has received solo exhibitions in the Victoria Art Gallery, Samara (2013); Camera Austria, Graz (2012); Kunsthalle Krems (2012); Institute of Contemporary Art, Sofia (2011); Kunstverein Friedrichshafen (2009); XL Gallery Moscow (2008); and Museum Moderner Kunst, Passau (2004) among others. In 2024, Jermolaewa will represent Austria in the 60th Venice Biennale. This is Anna Jermolaewa's first exhibition with Meredith Rosen Gallery and in New York.