When We Were Monsters

Haus Mödrath – Räume für Kunst

James Richards, *Internal Litter*, 2021.

July 26, 2021

When We Were Monsters
An Exhibition by James Richards
February 21, 2021–March 20, 2022

Add to Calendar

Haus Mödrath – Räume für Kunst
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Subject
Video Art
Sound Art
Collaboration

Participants
James Richards

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Known for his provocative and visually seductive moving-image works that collage together a wide range of source material—such as intimate home movies, archival footage, television signals and rich musical soundtracks—James Richards's work addresses the relentless flow of imagery that has come to define the 21st century, carving out a space where personal politics and digital materiality might meet. Concurrent with filmmaking, Richards has presented numerous exhibition projects informed through archival research as well as through ongoing collaborative exchanges with other artists.

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Haus Mödrath – Räume für Kunst presents *When We Were Monsters*, the largest exhibition by the artist to date. Occupying all four floors of Haus Mödrath, Richards has convened works which spatially and conceptually chime with one another across the numerous rooms. Weaving together Richards's sound, video works and sculptural works, the show also maps the relationships and influences around the artist's practice, including a number of collaborative artworks made with long-term interlocutors, artworks by close friends and influential figures.

Central to the exhibition is the presentation of *When We Were Monsters*, a new film made in collaboration with the artist and writer Steve Reinke. Since 2008, Reinke and Richards have intermittently been exchanging material across the Atlantic to their respective studios in Chicago and Berlin. Assembled during the first European COVID-19 lockdown, *When We Were Monsters* echoes the molecular porosity and existential vastness that marked this uncertain period.

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Throughout the exhibition at large there is a focus on the limits of perception and the frayed edges of individual subjectivity. X-rays, dream-sequences, ghost portraits and autoerotic collages, the selection charts where the past and present technological capacities of examination and classification become disrupted, or where the monstrous might emerge. Several new works have been made for the exhibition, conceived to echo other works on show or respond parasitically to the house itself. Part anthology and part exquisite corpse, *When We Were Monsters* relishes the deviations and perversions that appear on closer inspection or when searching for stable meanings. Of what happens when we lean into our desires and find the porous line between inside and outside, self and other, the body and the world.

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Participants
James Richards

James Richards (b. Cardiff, UK 1983) lives and works in Berlin and London.

Selected exhibitions include: *Alms for the Birds*, Castello Di Rivoli, Turin (2020); *SPEED 2*, Malmö Konsthall w/ Leslie Thornton (2019); *SPEED*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart w/ Leslie Thornton (2018); *Ache*, Cabinet, London (2019); *Slight Ache*, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (2019); *Mouth Room*, Galeri Isabella Bortolozzi (2017); *Requests and Antisongs*, Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2017); *Requests and Antisongs*, ICA, London (2016); *Crossing*, Rodeo London (2016); *Crumb Mahogan*, Bergen Kunsthall (2016); *James Richards*, Kunstverein München (2015); *James Richards*, CCA, Kitakyushu (2012); *Not Blacking Out, Just Turning The Lights Off*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2011); *Art Now*, w/ Clunie Reid Tate Britain, London (2010).

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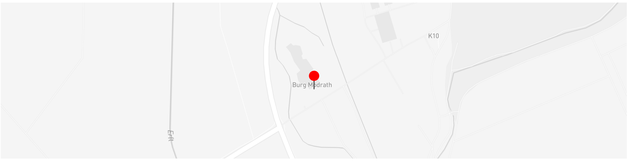
Selected group exhibitions include: *The Botanical Mind*, Camden Arts Centre (2020); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2017); *Less Than Zero*, Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis (2016); *Cut to Swipe*, MoMA, New York (2014); *Frozen Lakes*, Artists Space, New York (2013); and *The Encyclopedic Palace*, 55th International Art Exhibition La Biennale de Venezia, Venice (2013).

In 2017 Richards represented Wales at the 57th Venice Biennale, and he was shortlisted for the 2014 Turner prize.

HAUS MÖDRATH RÄUME FÜR KUNST

Map



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