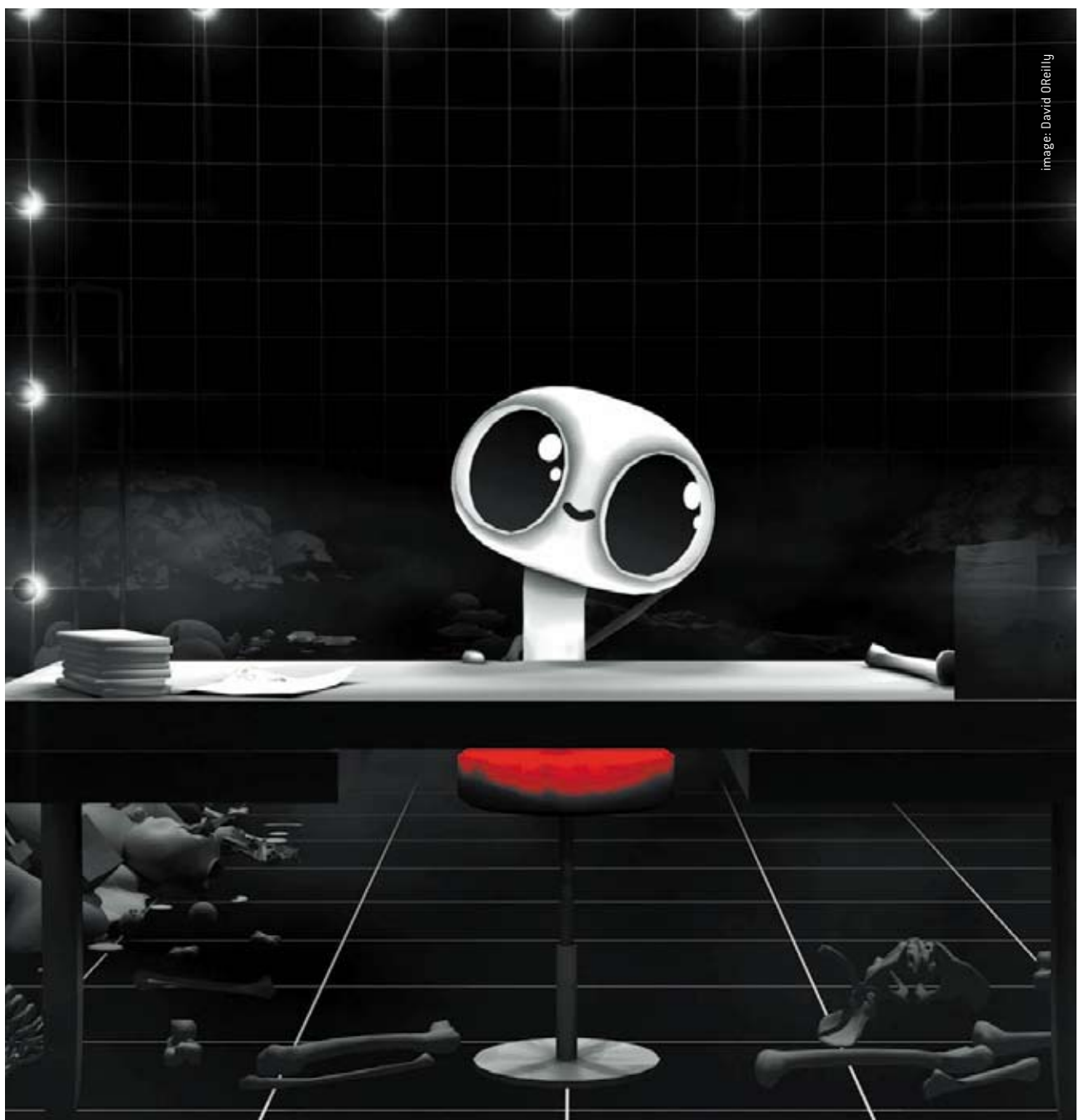




PICTOPIA
A FESTIVAL OF NEW CHARACTER WORLDS
EXHIBITIONS, SCREENINGS, CONFERENCE, PERFORMANCES

HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT, BERLIN, GERMANY
17 MARCH – 3 MAY, 2009



PICTOPIA

The explosion of character design at the beginning of the millennium changed visual culture distinctively. These graphically pared-down and bright-eyed pictograms spread like wildfire across digital media, advertising, fashion and art. They playfully sample and remix the visual codes of pop, folklore, brand logos and comics, but resist being restricted to any one genre. By engaging the viewer on a direct emotional level they are able to bypass language and cultural barriers – but do abstract designs really have the potential to fulfil a utopian fantasy of global visual communication?

In spring 2009, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt will host the PICTOPIA festival, the world's first ever large-scale presentation and celebration of the phenomenon. In March and April, this multi-disciplinary event location will be transformed into a character biotope and a meeting point for an international scene of designers, artists, producers and an interested public. At the heart of the festival is an *exhibition* which explores the huge diversity of the character universe, where artists remix and sample, condense the surreal and uncanny, inflate all proportions and stage bizarre rituals to introduce their characters into contemporary culture.

The festival programme also features the **3rd Pictoplasma Conference** which, since its inception in 2004, has set the standard for a playful yet concentrated approach to the subject. For the first time, scientific light will be shed on the character phenomenon in a *symposium*, which brings together experts from the fields of art history, cultural studies, robotics and media theory. The **Pictoplasma Animation Festival** will put the characters in motion, steering well clear of the mainstream. And the **Character Walk** will lead visitors through 30 galleries and project rooms throughout Berlin-Mitte and deeper into the visual worlds of individual artists.

The festival is the brainchild of the Berlin-based project Pictoplasma which, since 1999, has brought the phenomenon into the public eye through numerous books, installations, exhibitions and performances. It has established Berlin as the epicentre of an avant-garde and interdisciplinary focus on figuration – a position PICTOPIA will build on.

EXHIBITION

19 March - 3 May 2009

Original artwork and new installations
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

3RD PICTOPLASMA CONFERENCE, SYMPOSIUM & ANIMATION FESTIVAL

19 - 21 March 2009

Artist lectures, symposium, panels,
performances and animation screenings
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

CHARACTER WALK

17 - 22 March 2009

Tour through 30 galleries throughout Berlin

PICTOPIA PERFORMANCES

23 - 25 April 2009

Dance and performance art, extended
screenings
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin



Friends With You



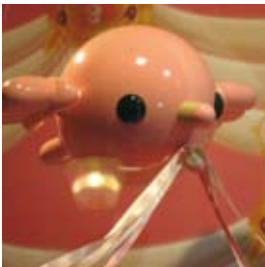
Boris Hoppek



Japanese toy



Friends With You



Doudouboy



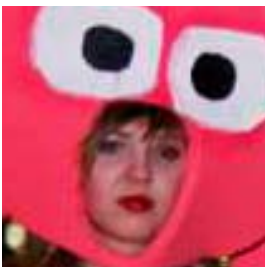
Tim Biskup



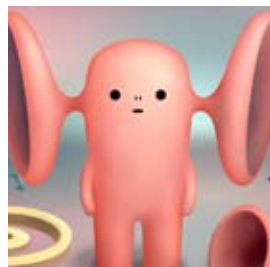
Gangpol & Mit



Motomichi Nakamura



Bas Kusters



Jun Seo Hahm



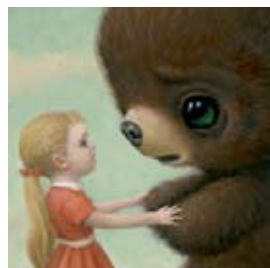
Nagi Noda



AJ Fosik



Ben Frost



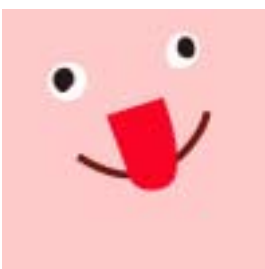
Mark Ryden



The Character Ride



Jun Seo Hahm



Marta Antelo



Pictoplasma "Get Into Character"



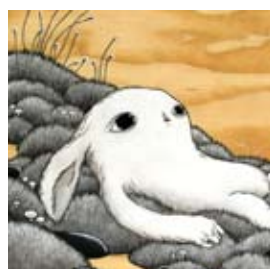
Boris Hoppek



Doudouboy



Gangpol & Mit



Moki



Friends With You



Shoboshobo



Ben Frost



Pictoplasma „Characters at War“ 2004



Friends With You „Cloud City“ 2005

EXHIBITION

Pictopia presents the first comprehensive show of contemporary artists, who apply or deconstruct the strategy of reduced figuration. The circuit of paintings, photography, sculptures, installations, videos and drawings exhibits works of Boris Hoppek (DE), Olaf Breuning (CH), Doma Collective (ARG), Mark Ryden (USA), Hideaki Kawashima (JP), Gary Baseman (USA), Edwina Ashton (GB), Friends With You (USA), Tim Biskup (USA), Motomichi Nakamura (JP), Mehdi Herberg / Shoboshobo (FR), Daniel & Geo Fuchs (DE), James Marshall (USA), Fons Schiedon (NL), AJ Fosik (USA), Nagi Noda (JP), Golan Levin & Greg Baltus (USA), Waynehorse (NL), Akinori Oishi (JP), Faiyaz Jafri (NL / USA), Ben Frost (AUS), Ian Stevenson (UK), Doudouboy (FR), Dennis Tyfus (B), Matt Lock (USA), Arnaud Lomeau (F) and many more.

The exhibition focuses on the affective relationship between characters and their beholder. It explores their transition through different media, the artistic strategy of becoming a character, whether in virtual or realistic worlds, as media installation or as oversized, corporeal sculpture. Ludic moments invite the visitors to physically interact with the figurative objects and inspires to reflect upon the phantasy of entering the plane of the image.

A catalogue will be published, with original contributions by Paul McCarthy (USA), Wolfgang Ullrich (DE), Thomas Macho (DE), Lev Manovich (USA), Anneleen Masschelein (B), John Emigh (USA), Jochen Gros (DE), Brian Duffy (GB), and many others. Ethnology, performance art, cultural history, design theory, philosophy, image theory, art history, robotics and media theory will shed light upon the phenomena.

Opening: 19 March, 2009
open until: 3 May, 2009
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin



Christian Montenegro, Pictoplasma Conference 2006



Animation Screening, Pictoplasma Conference 2004



Workshop, Pictoplasma Conference 2004

PICTOPLASMA CONFERENCE

The third edition of the unique event for character design and its makers from around the world. Presentations of trend-setting designers, artists and animation film makers, among other Klaus Haapaniemi (FIN), James Jarvis (UK), Boris Hoppek (DE/ES), Gaston Caba (ARG), Faiyaz Jafri (NL / USA), Risa Sato (JP), Charles Glaubitz (MX), and AJ Fosik (USA). With film programmes showing the "Characters in Motion", a focussed selection of motion graphics, short films and music videos, all distinguished by the design and staging of the characters.

For the first time, a symposium discusses the cultural implications of the phenomena from an academic perspective. With contributions by Christoph Bartneck (information design, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven / NL), Stefanie Diekmann and Michael Liebe (Universität Potsdam / DE), Cindy Lisica (art theory, University of the Arts in London / UK), Geoffrey Long (media theory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge / USA), Ken Belson (New York Times / USA), Frenchy Lunning (cultural studies, Minneapolis College of Art and Design / USA), Mario Bührmann (ethnology, Freie Universität Berlin/DE), Ragnhild Tronstad (theory of performance, theatre and media, Universität Oslo / NOR) and Verena Kuni (art and media theory, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität Frankfurt / DE).

Open workshops actively integrate the attendees and call for participation. A programme of performances, VJ-parties, installations and interventions will further add to the programme.

19 - 21 March, 2009

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin



Character Walk 2009



W+K Tokyolab



Tado

CHARACTER WALK

As pre-opening to the festival, a walk will guide through 30 galleries and project spaces in Berlin Mitte, presenting shows by individual artists. British design duo Tado will present their Private Panda Club, an installation to get in touch with the animal inside of each of us. Nina Braun, the German artist who is well known for her soft and silky sculptures, will present a selection far away from the standard plush-doll aesthetics. Street art legends Flying Fortress (DE) and The London Police (UK/NL) will transform an abandoned gas station, invaded by their ‚Teddy Troops‘ and ‚Lads‘. Russian shooting star Protey Temen inquires the logic of packaging with an installation labeled ‚Breakfast Heroes‘. Eunjung Hwang (KR) shows her stunning animations in combination with inflatable sculptures.

For the first time, a **Residency** accommodates two young artists, Gedimins Siaulys (LT) and Michal Dabrowski (PL). In collaboration with the project General Public, they will present their installations on ‚Pagan Lullabies‘ and the ‚Heroes of Might and Maybe‘.

A first **Party** will gather attendees of Pictoplasma at the Weekend Club. Canadian musicians Guillaume & the Coutu Dumonts and Crackhaus will heat up the dancefloor with live performances.

On Saturday, the **CharacterScope Showdown** at Tape Club Berlin will celebrate the visual wealth of characters in motion with video installations by Motomichi Nakamura (JP/USA) and W+K Tokyolab. Gangpol & Mit (FR) will give a concert of their ‚Sonic & Visual in Love‘, followed by Ben Butler and Mousepad (UK) and pan/ton (DE) before everyone will dance the night away to minimal legend Tobias Thomas (Kompakt).

17 - 22 March, 2009

Galleries and project spaces, Berlin Mitte

18 March, 22h, **Welcome Party** at Weekend Club

Alexanderstr. 7, 12 Floor

21 March, 23h, **CharacterScope Showdown** at Tape Club Berlin, Heidestr. 14

ABOUT THE PICTOPLASMA PROJECT:

The Berlin-based project Pictoplasma has been following developments in contemporary character design for nearly a decade, promoting visibility of this new figurative phenomenon, initiating creative networks and establishing a lively exchange of ideas. Its numerous publications and events have made Pictoplasma a character-design platform with international acclaim.

FESTIVALS:

- > 2008 Pictoplasma NYC, Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, New York
 - > 2008 Pictoplasma Argentina, Trimarchi DG, Mar del Plata, Argentina
 - > 2007 2nd Pictoplasma Animation Festival, Kino Babylon, Berlin
 - > 2006 2nd Pictoplasma Conference, Haus der Berliner Festspiele, Berlin
 - > 2005 Pictoplasma Animation Festival, Kino Babylon, Berlin
 - > 2004 Pictoplasma Conference, Café Moskau, Berlin
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INSTALLATIONS AND PERFORMANCES:

- > 2007 The Character Ride, Installation in Den Haag, Berlin
 - > 2006 Get into Character!, Performance in Halle / Saale, Essen, Berlin
 - > 2006 Essence of Rabbit, Installation in Nice, Berlin, Athens, Winston-Salem
 - > 2005-2006 Colour Me!, Installation in Düsseldorf, Peterborough, Halle, Hongkong
 - > 2004-2006 Characters at War, Installation in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Winston-Salem, Peterborough, Los Angeles
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PUBLICATIONS:

- > 2007 Pictoplasma - Characters in Motion 2, book and DVD, Pictoplasma Publishing
 - > 2006 Pictoplasma - The Character Encyclopaedia, Pictoplasma Publishing
 - > 2005 Colour Me, Pictoplasma!, Pictoplasma Publishing
 - > 2005 Pictoplasma - Characters in Motion, book and DVD, Pictoplasma Publishing
 - > 2003 Pictoplasma 2, Die Gestalten Verlag
 - > 2001 Pictoplasma, Die Gestalten Verlag
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