

Galerie Neu

Bianca Heuser, "*Home in the Streets, Alone in the Streets*",
Spike, Issue #63 Spring 2020, p. 174 - 175

HOME IN THE STREETS, ALONE IN THE SHEETS

“THE SAME ROOM: JULIE BECKER IN DIALOGUE”
 GALERIE NEU
 8 FEBRUARY –
 14 MARCH 2020

(2019–2020) before the relentless, traumatising ubiquity of its bank, or elementary-school, or doctor’s-office aesthetic wraps visitors in a cosy blanket of vague familiarity. This effect might vary depending on your relationship to waiting rooms and/or cubicles. Win McCarthy’s “Street Scenes” (2019) further sings the praises of modern life’s mundanities and mysteries, which sometimes are the same. In black and white close-up photographs of architectural scale models – pasted on makeshift passe-partouts, evidence-style, using tape – even the miniature plastic pedestrians appear like the mesmerising, elusive heroes of 1950s film noir, sulkily staking out a street corner, unaware of the private detective following and documenting their every move: in such a formulaic genre, it’s all about narrativising. Similarly, McCarthy’s *Empty Volume* (2019), a glass-encased refrigerator door continues the anticlimactic crime scene vibes that are so very LA.

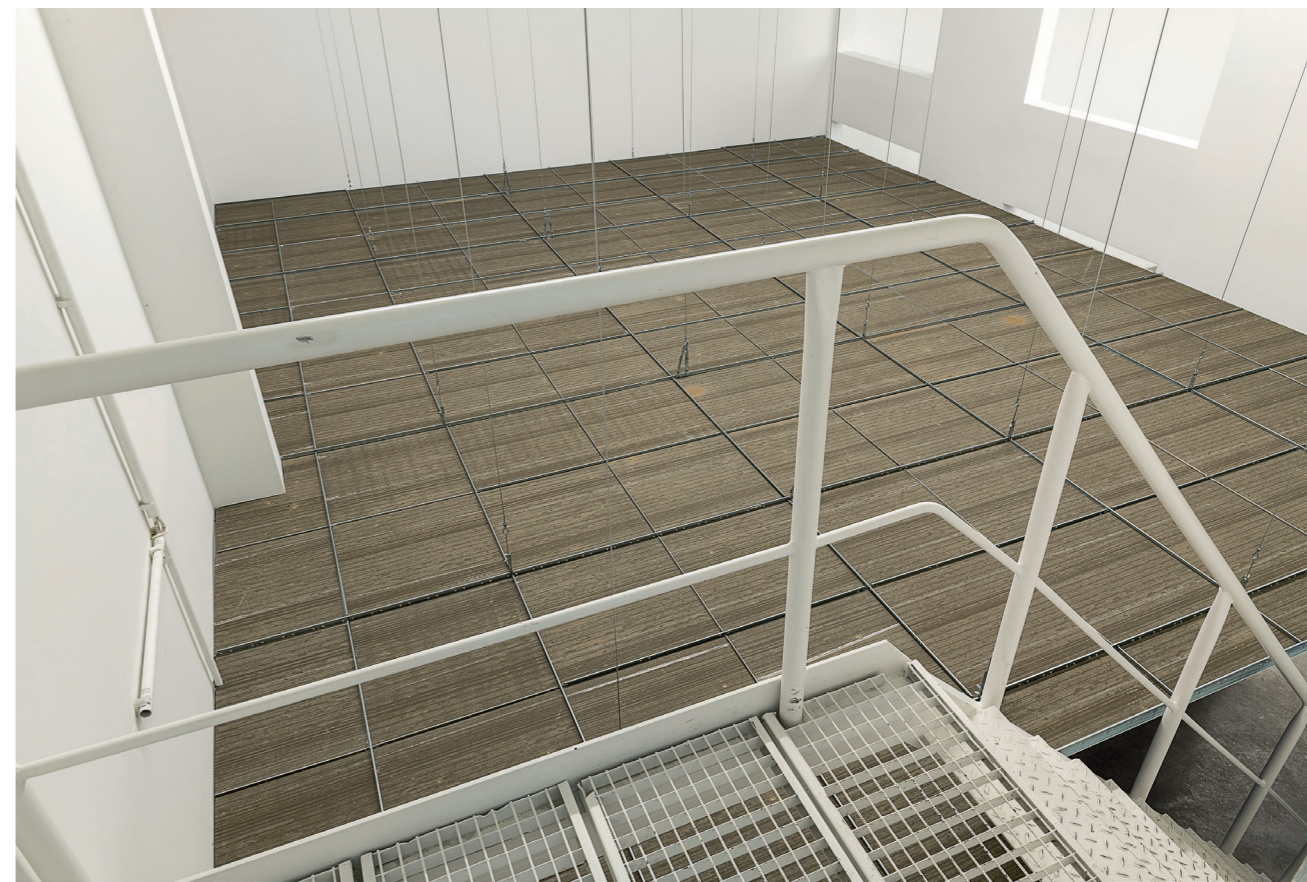
Los Angeles, of course, being the hometown of Julie Becker (1972–2016) as well as one of her oeuvre’s main subjects. Upstairs, Becker – whose special role as a sort of hosting artist in this exhibition remains unspecified by the nevertheless extensive press release

The following words may have never been uttered about a dropped ceiling – and almost certainly not about one made from a standardised modular system, you know, the white tiled ones with surface patterning – but I’m going to say it: I think you should keep it. Just like that, it transforms Galerie Neu’s high-ceilinged entrance space into a corporate lobby, replete with its comforting promise of anonymity and watery coffee. It only takes a second to adjust to the eerie, disorienting effect of Ima-Abasi Okon’s gorgeously generic installation *M – C – M*

– putters around her studio and observes the California Federal Bank building on Wilshire Boulevard in the elusively sentimental video *Federal Building with Music* (2002). There is a profound big-city-loneliness to this work, which is only heightened by the ghosts inhabiting it. Becker got the studio rent-free from her landlord, the California Federal Bank, in return for her cleaning out the belongings of the former tenant, who passed away from an AIDS-related illness. Like a child cleaning her own room, she got lost in his



Julie Becker, *Interior corner #7*, 1993
 C-print, 90 x 70 cm



Ima-Abasi Okon, *M – C – M*, 2019–20
 Metal grid, (104 of) 465 white fissured ceiling tiles wire,
 (without) morphine, (without) insulin,
 (without) ultrasound gel and (without) gold,
 dimensions variable

trash and treasures, spending several years digging through his belongings. It’s a little creepy, but innocent, and touching, too.

The same innocent creepiness is conserved in the late artist’s *The Same Room* (1993–1996) series. Rendered through her female gaze, the murder-motel aesthetic of the scale-model corners she built and photographed manages two registers simultaneously. This room seems to be equal parts fantasy and calamity: somewhere to put your head down, but to the sound of permanent construction and the stench of dead dreams. Oh to be a woman! In some ways, the whole show seems to juxtapose a supervised illusion of freedom in

anonymous public spaces with the prison that a home often is, and in multiple ways simultaneously. With abandon, Jesse Darling’s sculptures evoke the only-kind-I-know type of (dis)comfort of a childhood home. How comfortable this flashback feels likely depends on how intimately familiar you are with your own childhood trauma . . . and what kind of weird stuff you made your dolls do.

Touching on a lot of tender, and untended, nerves, the at-times startling vulnerability of the show, like a PJ Harvey album, is not for the faint of heart. It is, however, invigorating fodder for free association, the psychoanalytic term for summoning your inner child – or college grad. Ima-Abasi Okon’s air

freshener installation [*Turn on the lights, I’m lookin’ for ‘er, I’m lookin’, lookin’ for ‘er’ & them S-e-I-AH: Future-proof Wanderer’s in the sea of fog* (2018)], sitting atop the lowered ceiling she used to horizontally cut the foyer in half, lends the exhibition a curiously futuristic, witchy aroma. It’s beautiful, modern, weird, and, in that way, intoxicating. The list of materials for this fragrance includes the artist’s jewellery, black soap, insulin, kinesiology tape, home-made lychee serum, “morphine oxtail,” soursop and ultrasound gel. It’s so subtle and ineffable, it seems to almost directly address the unconscious. In fact, I think I can smell it right now.

Bianca Heuser



Urban Realities: 'The Same Room' at Galerie Neu

Article by Hannah Carroll Harris // Mar. 06, 2020

Hidden in the hinterhof of a GDR-era apartment block, Galerie Neu is an unexpected find. The former power station that would have once heated the stacks of surrounding flats currently houses a show that similarly reveals stories surrounding the complexity of urban space. 'The Same Room: Julie Becker in dialogue' takes as its starting point the interdisciplinary practice of American artist Julie Becker, who lived her entire life in Los Angeles and was well-attuned to the harsh realities of living on the peripheries of a rapidly developing city. A selection of her photographs, drawings and videos are presented in dialogue with recent works by [Jesse Darling](http://www.berlinartlink.com/2019/05/14/jesse-darling/) (<http://www.berlinartlink.com/2019/05/14/jesse-darling/>), Win McCarthy and Ima-Abasi Okon, in a show that uncovers real and imagined urban worlds and the precarity of living in a metropolis.



Julie Becker: 'The Same Room (3 shelves)', 1993-1996 // Photo by Stefan Korte

Entering the space you become aware of the dimmed lighting in the entrance room, though it's not immediately apparent that something has obscured the regular lighting. A lowered ceiling comprised of standardised modular systems commonly found in offices or waiting rooms alters the original architecture of the gallery. The metal grid holding 104 white fissured ceiling tiles—a work by Ima-Abasi Okon—deceives you for just long enough to disorient, and makes for an oppressive welcome to what is, overall, a quietly uneasy exhibition.

In the gallery's main room, this subversive approach to space and, more specifically, scale, continues. While studying, Becker began her prolific investigations into the fabrication and fantasy of urban spaces, both real and fictionalised. In the photographic series 'The Same Room' and 'Interior Corner,' Becker obscures the scale of existing interior spaces and staged models to the point where the real becomes fake and vice versa. These stark, saturated images of what could be empty apartments or abandoned hotel rooms punctuate the works of the other artists, who have followed in Becker's exploration of physical and psychological realms.



Julie Becker: 'Interior corner #5' and 'Interior corner #3', 1993 // Photo by Stefan Korte

Venturing towards the voyeuristic, McCarthy's 'Empty Volume' (2019) is comprised of a fridge door, with butter, probiotics and food containers, encased in a glass cabinet. With the uncanny resemblance of a multi-story complex, the upper level (the freezer door) is slightly off-kilter, perhaps a suggestion that current modes of urban living are at the brink of collapse. Similarly, Darling's 'Virgin Variations' mimic the modularity of apartment-block life through the presentation of a wooden locker system, with each compartment donning its own personality through ad-hoc dioramic assemblages of found objects, photographs and general street-refuse. Here, you get a sense that, while those living a privileged IKEA-catalogue life in mega-metropolises may have the illusion of individuality, the reality of the pigeon-holed existence of late-capitalism is more restrictive than it seems.



Win McCarthy: 'Empty Volume', 2019 // Photo by Stefan Korte

As you continue, through Okon's false ceiling to the second level of the gallery, you glean crucial insight into the life and mind of Becker. Dedicated to the uncertainty she faced living in the gentrifying outskirts of LA from the late 90s to the early 2000s, these works evoke a profound sense of loneliness and compulsion. As the sole tenant of a neglected building owned by California Federal Bank, Becker paid reduced rent with the agreement that she would clear the basement of the belongings of its former inhabitant, a man who

had passed away from AIDS-related illness. As well as being an endless source of inspiration to Becker, this grim reality presents an interesting lens through which to view the more contemporary works, with the realisation that, decades on, similar problems of gentrification persist.

Of the works from that era, 'Federal Building with Music' exemplifies Becker's dark-humoured perspective on an often bleak reality. The twenty-nine-minute film plays like an ironic love song dedicated to the bank that is not only her landlord but the central view from her window. Shakey, Super-8 film taken of this vista is interspersed with footage of a scale model of the drab office building as it is winched between floors of her derelict block. An upbeat soundtrack of a Mexican tecnobanda outfit from a cassette that Becker found discarded in the car park of the bank plays in the background, offering a surprisingly optimistic take of an otherwise dark story.



Jesse Darling: 'Virgin Variations', 2019 // Photo by Stefan Korte

This catchy, fast-paced rhythm also makes for an absurd backing track to the other view that is apparent from the top floor of the gallery. Two rectangular windows frame the seemingly endless balconies of the surrounding apartment buildings. In these private spaces, laundry hangs and plants are watered, and yet it is as though they have been

purposefully curated into the space. In this exhibition, you get a glimpse of the inner lives of the artists through their subversion of space, scale and imagination and this even cleverly extends to our (very real) outer world.

It wasn't until I was leaving the gallery that I noticed Darling's small-scale cardboard diorama titled 'Votive/Apologia (for and after Julie Becker)'. Quiet and unobtrusive, it encapsulates the bare emotion hidden beneath Becker's photographs, films and drawings, and emphasises the impression she has left behind through her expansive and often under-appreciated body of work.

Exhibition Info

GALERIE NEU (<http://www.galerieneu.net/exhibition/1189>)

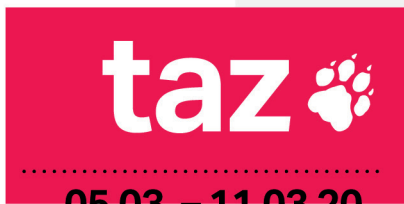
Group show: 'The Same Room: Julie Becker in dialogue'

Exhibition: Feb. 08 – Mar. 14, 2020

Linienstraße 119, 10115 Berlin



Jesse Darling: 'Votive/Apologia (for & after Julie Becker)', 2020 // Photo by Stefan Korte



plan

05.03. – 11.03.20

kultur + programm für berlin

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Ima-Abasi Okon [Turn on the
lights, I'm lookin' for ,er, I'm
lookin', lookin' for ,er] & them
S-e-l-AH: Future-proof
Wanderer's in the sea of fog,
2018. Foto: Stefan Korte.



Kunst

- 68projects**
Die Landschaft fängt an, wo der Mensch aufhört. Oliver Westerbarkey. Di-Sa 11-18 Uhr bis 25.4. Fasanenstr. 68
- Bröhan-Museum**
Blackbox #8: Abschied und Anfang. Ostdeutsche Porträts 1989-1990. Stefan Moses. Fotografie. Di-So/Feiert. 10-18 Uhr bis 19.4. Schlossstr. 1a
- Daniel Marzona**
Death Chase. Vajiko Chachkhiani. Mi-Fr 11-18, Sa 12-18 Uhr bis 28.3. Marienstr. 10
- Dittrich & Schlechtriem**
Duna Blanca. Jacques Bonnard, Tina Braegger, Natacha Donze, Sylvie Fleury, Frederic Gabioud u. a. Di-Sa 11-18 Uhr bis 11.4. Linienstr. 23
- Efremidis Gallery**
Squish. Carlotta Bailly-Borg, Christiane Blattmann, Lindsay Lawson, Teresa Solar, Jens Kothe. Gruppenausstellung; Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg. E.X.P.O. (sub sole). Di-Sa 11-18 Uhr bis 18.4. Ernst-Reuter-Platz 2
- Galerie ART CRU**
Caroline Croizat. Diversité. Di-Fr 12-18 Uhr, Sa 14-18 Uhr bis 7.3. Oranienburger Str. 27
- Galerie Barbara Thumm**
Das Bild steht auf der Fensterbank. Anna Oppermann, Zeichnungen. Di-Fr 11-18, Sa 12-18 Uhr bis 18.4. Markgrafenstr. 68
- Galerie im Saalbau**
Neuköllner Kunstpreis 2020. Mara Diener, Eva Dittrich, Vanessa Enriquez, Catherine Evans, Jinran Ha, Katrin Hofert, Johannes Lacher, Jana Sophia Nolle. Gruppenausstellung der Nominierten Arbeiten. Mo.-So. 10-20 Uhr bis 29.3., Karl-Marx-Str. 141
- Galerie Judin**
Hortensia Mi Kafchin. Death is Not a Piece of Cake. Di-Sa. 11-18 Uhr bis 11.4. Potsdamer Str. 83
- Galerie Neu**
The Same Room: Julie Becker in dialogue. Julie Becker, Jesse Darling, Win McCarthy, Ima-Abasi Okon. Di-Sa 11-18 Uhr bis 14.3. Linienstr. 119 abc
- Galerie Tanja Wagner**
Anna Witt. Unboxing the future. Di-Sa. 11-18 Uhr bis 15.4. Pohlstr. 64
- Galerie Vincenz Sala**
Seestücke. Mit Hendrik Kraven, Pablo D'Antoni, Tilo Riedels. Mi.-Fr. 15-20 Uhr bis 14.3. Sigmaringer Str. 23
- Georg Kolbe Museum**
herman de vries. how green is your grass? Täglich 10-18 Uhr bis 3.5. Sensburger Allee 75



Galerie Neu

Die Häuser und die, die darin wohnen

Viel zu früh verstorben und viel zu wenig bekannt – gerade hierzulande – ist die Künstlerin **Julie Becker** (1972–2016). Becker, die in L.A. lebte und arbeitete, beschäftigte sich mit den Wechselwirkungen zwischen Wohnräumen und den Menschen darin, mit psychologisch oder emotional aufgeladenen Aspekten von Architektur und Inneneinrichtung. In Fotografie, Film und Zeichnung etwa, was sich momentan in der **Galerie Neu** besichtigen lässt. Aus den 90ern und 00er Jahren stammen die Arbeiten, wirken jedoch 2020,

zu Zeiten der Wohnungskrise, umso aktueller. „Whole“ etwa: ein Projekt, rund um den Umzug der Künstlerin in ein heruntergekommenes Gebäude der California Federal Bank im heute durchgentrifzierten Echo Park und mit Blick auf die Bank. Becker wohnte dort für kleines Geld in und mit den Hinterlassenschaften ihres an Aids verstorbenen Vormieters. „The Same Room: Julie Becker in dialogue“ führt Beckers Kunst mit Arbeiten von **Jesse Darling**, **Win McCarthy** und **Ima-Abasi Okon** zusammen, die auf ihre Weise wenig hei-

melige, prekäre oder beunruhigende Architekturen thematisieren. Okon hat eine solche gleich in die Galerie integriert, Deckenplatten hineingehängt, wie man sie von unwirtlichen Behörden und Büros kennt. Ausgestattet sind sie mit den auf dem Titel abgebildeten Lufterfrischern. Alle sechs Minuten versprühen diese einen Duft, dessen Zusammensetzung von mannigfaltigen (unerfüllten?) Sehnsüchten erzählt. Der Geruch des Schmucks der Künstlerin ist dabei, Insulin, Morphinum, Litschi-Serum und Kinesio-Tape. (*bsh*)

Julie Becker, „Whole (Projector)“, 1999. Installationsansicht in der Galerie Neu, Berlin, 2020. Foto: Stefan Korte

Bis 14.3., Di.–Sa. 11–18 Uhr, Linienstr. 119 abc

 **berlinmusik**

Rollende Rhythmen

Das Schöne an der Gegenwart ist ja, allen schlechten Nachrichten im Allgemeinen zum Trotz, dass Musiker sich mehr trauen, einfach die Dinge zu tun, die ihnen gefallen, ohne sie in bestimmte Schubladen zu stecken. Wobei man diesen Satz sofort korrigieren muss: Musiker, die ihr Geld wert sind, waren immer schon bereit und geneigt, einfach die Dinge zu tun, die ihnen gefallen, ohne sie in bestimmte Schubladen zu stecken.

Für die Schubladen waren eher so böse Menschen zuständig wie Labelmanager, PR-Profis und, am allerschlimmsten, die Musikkritiker. Die wollen ja immer bloß Dinge in Kategorien wegsortieren wie Sachbearbeiter ihre Formulare in Aktenordner. Jetzt, wo Labels oft von Musikern betrieben werden und sowohl PR-Agenturen als auch Musikmagazine zu kämpfen haben, gelten andere Regeln. Übertrieben, aber nicht völlig falsch.

Tatsächlich ist es in der Musik ein bisschen aus der Mode gekommen, die Dinge unter Überschriften zu packen. Dafür muss man sich

English Translation:

Julie Becker died far too young and is known much too little - especially in this country. Becker (1972-2016), who lived and worked in LA, dealt with the interactions between living spaces and the people inhabiting them. Her work also depicts psychologically or emotionally charged aspects of architecture and interior through photography, film and drawing, as currently on view at Galerie Neu. Though her works were produced in the nineties and early 2000s, they appear all the more current today in 2020, in times of the housing shortage. "Whole" for instance: A project all about the artist's relocation to a run-down building of the California Federal Bank, facing the bank itself, located in Echo Park, which has by now been completely gentrified. Becker lived there for little money and with the legacies of its previous tenant who had died of AIDS. *"The Same Room: Julie Becker in dialogue"* puts Becker's art in correspondence with works by Jesse Darling, Win McCarthy and Ima-Abasi Okon, that in their own way address uncomfortable, precarious or distressing architectures.

Okon integrated one such architecture directly into the gallery space. Ceiling panels were hung into the space, evoking associations of inhospitable offices and authorities. The construction is fitted with the air fresheners pictured on the title. Every six minutes a scent is sprayed. Its composition recounts manifold (unfulfilled) desires. There's the notion of the artist's jewelry in this fragrance; insulin, morphine, lychee serum and kinesio tape.