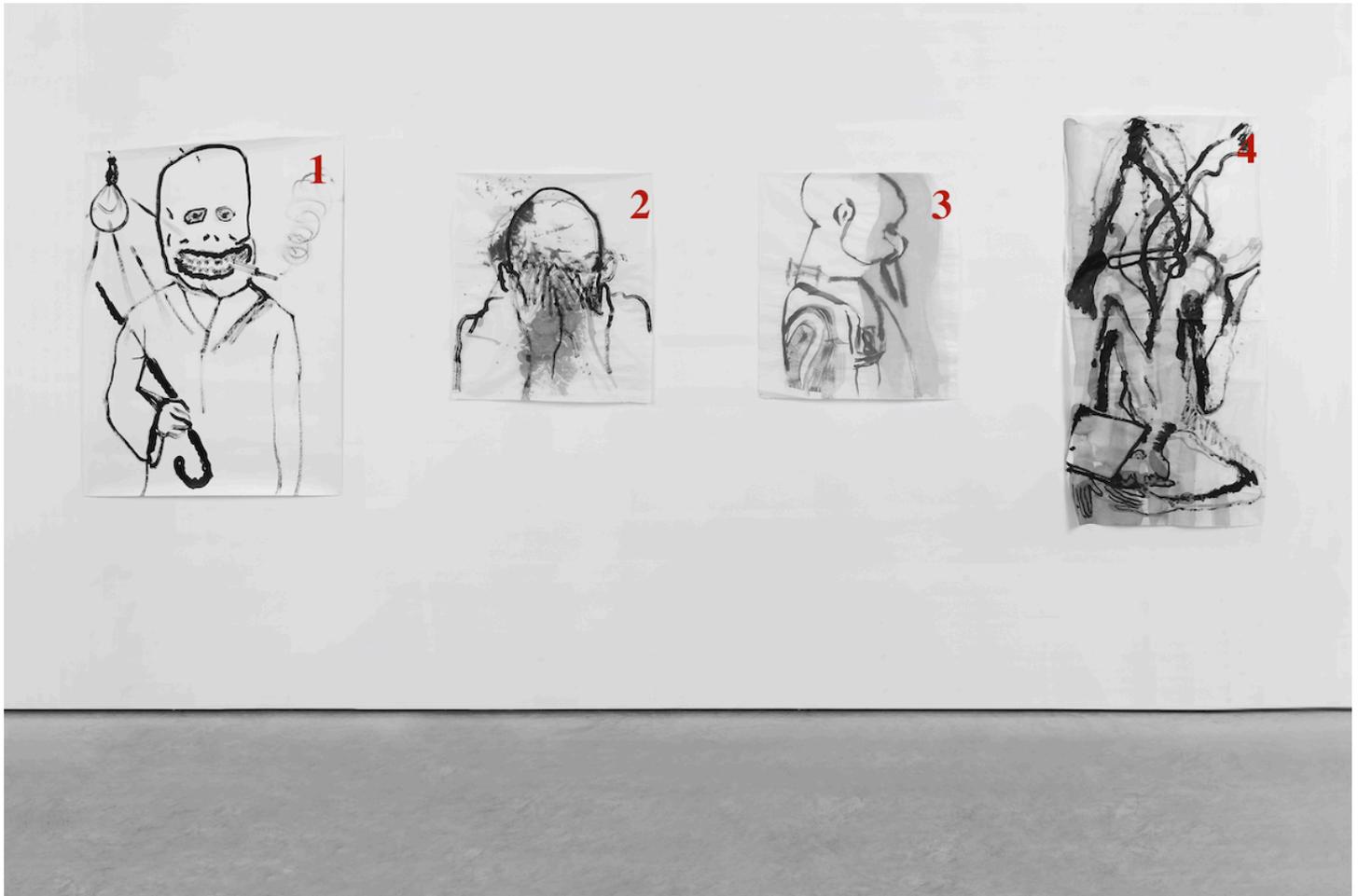


**WILD WALLS #3****Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen**

German artist George Grosz (1893-1959) had an extensive collection of walking sticks. He had a penchant for shiny shoes and liked to show up in public elegantly dressed as a dandy. His theatrical performances at presentations of the group of Dadaists in Berlin, of which he was a part, have been described frequently and in colorful terms. For Grosz, the world was a theater of extras and in his work, especially in his drawings, his often grim observations of everyday life are directly depicted.

There is a famous photo of Grosz dressed in a long coat and wearing a death mask. That photo was the starting point for the drawing *George Grosz with mask*, 2017, by Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen. For Grosz, drawing was a form of observation, like it is for Breure & Van Hulzen. The four drawings in *Wild Wall # 3* were originally made to develop ideas and thoughts for projects, performances, videos or installations. They have an instantaneous character, opposite to thoughtful compositions. Every drawing is the action, the result of a short performative moment. *George Grosz with mask* is drawn in fast, direct lines. As in the photo, death has a walking stick clamped under his arm and a cigarette pipe carelessly sticks out of his smiling mouth. But unlike in the photo, the black and white drawing shows a light bulb that casts rays of light over the figure. A mysterious and theatrical addition to the original image.

Theater has been an important factor in Breure & Van Hulzen's work from the very start. In 2017 they began making sculptures – assemblages in the form of human figures, but also separate heads in ceramics. The basis for these first sculptures was the notion that people are, in essence, always playing a role. Such a role is accompanied by certain personality traits, a specific 'mask', an individual body language, and deliberately chosen attributes such as clothing. The sculptures were presented as representatives of certain 'roles'. They functioned as actors in an equally realistic as fictional theater of the everyday. This could be seen in e.g. *The Floor is Lava*, a solo-presentation in Marres in 2019, or the installation *Accidents Waiting to Happen* in the Prix de Rome exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2019-2020.

A recurring thread in the multidisciplinary corpus of works by Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen is their interest in human behavior, the coded structures of that behavior, the impact of time, place and socio-economic factors on relations between people, physiognomy and body language. Since antiquity, the face and outlook of a person have been considered 'the mirror of the soul'. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, (pseudo)scientific treatises such as those of Swiss theologian Johann Kaspar Lavater caused physiognomy – the theory that character traits can be discerned from a person's outward appearance – to become hugely popular. Wealthy ladies used the Lavater method to analyze the facial features of their secret lovers. As a result of this fashionable pastime, some people adopted the habit of wearing masks outside their homes.

The four drawings of *Wild Wall # 3* – made by Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen in 2017 - have gained a special meaning, in this time of forced isolation. In each of the drawings the face of the depicted figure is covered, whether by wearing a mask (1), by hands being slapped in front of the face (2,3) or by disappearing into a laptop (4). People cover their faces as a sign of grief, sadness, or shame, or as they do today for safety reasons. However, the paradox of the mask is that it not only disguises -or protects- but can reveal things too. This also happens in the online experience, which is now the only form of communication. The idea of disappearing is fundamental to the online presence in which someone pops up or disappears like a ghost at the touch of a button. Contact is different without the possibility to read someone's body language. People often assume a different personality online, a mask, and can thus manipulate their own identity.

1. George Grosz with mask, 2017

ink on paper

178 x 125 cm

€ 4.200 (VAT excl.)

2. Those are pearls that were her eyes. Look!, 2017

ink on rice paper

112 x 96,5 cm

€ 2.800 (VAT excl.)

3. Untitled, 2017  
ink on rice paper  
112 x 96,5 cm  
€ 2.800 (VAT excl.)
  
4. And he vanished from their sight, 2017  
ink on rice paper  
203 x 95 cm  
€ 4.200 (VAT excl.)

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