

### Try ordering a simple COFFEE for yourself somewhere today!

So, for example, various arrangements as if shot directly from above with a repro camera of flat, transparently translucent, potato-slice-like ovals — pastel-light-hued, seemingly completely disembodied, almost a bit like watercolour-like shadows of something, floating before a nearly neutral white. But shadows of what? It almost reminds me of ... ? Exactly, the title then indeed says it: “Pringles.” But what kind of colours are those? When I look at them, what comes to mind is an image that I just recently encountered again — unfortunately not as a surely splendid original serigraphy, but instead as a small, low-res image in an online shop somewhere in the Web — namely by the painter Rupprecht Geiger, who made a name for himself in the 1960s and 70s with his colour field painting with, for the most part, jazzy colours: “Oranger Kreis mit gelbem Kranz auf weiß” (Orange Circle with Yellow Wreath on White) from 1971, which has quite beautiful parallels to Stefanie Seufert’s picture “Untitled (Pringles 4)”. The colours here are therefore completely uncoupled from the object, totally *unpringlelike*; this is not photography as one is mainly usually familiar with, in which objects and/or scenarios are realistically (or should I rather say photo-realistically) recognisable. Raspberries and lemons, for example, have indeed not appeared in Pringles’ program of flavours thus far. But perhaps the ghostlike photo, which was possibly created in the lab as a photogram, anticipates something that lies in the very near future, perhaps precisely these flavours will indeed exist at some point in time, and indeed more quickly than we imagine? Just think about broccoli and garlic ice cream! Or the one with a brandy and sardine taste, and the beef ice-cream sundae, and Viagra ice cream (that’s not a joke, it all supposedly exists, at the Coromoto ice cream café in Venezuela, for instance). Okay, ice cream is ice cream, and Pringles are Pringles, and Venezuela is far away, but what is actually going on with the totally exploding number of new flavors and differentiations in product variants extending to all possible ramifications on ALL levels, in nearly all areas? What is it actually trying to tell us if even in the case of something like German beer, which still had an utterly unshakable-seeming conservative cultural image until twenty years ago, is suddenly available in everything from naturally cloudy URBIER in the age-old flip-top bottle design to trendy bon-bon-coloured concoctions with some sort of fruit-taste additives and labels and bottles to match? Or quite particularly succinctly also in the case of COFFEE: Try ordering a simple COFFEE for yourself somewhere today! — With such a nerve-strainingly unspecific order, you will surely now only reap displeasure, a questioning lack of understanding, and/or tired pity! Or simply browse perhaps through the variants of just one single type of sneaker produced up to now by one single manufacturer: the Nike “Air Max 90”! The crass degree of almost hysterically boundless differentiation, whose point of reference, as the number in the name already says, is quite truly a retro number — the “original” is from the 1990s — that can barely be surpassed! And therefore, SO WHAT? DESIGN YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL PRINGLES GENERATION! With this, I therefore already want to register, in black on white, the copyright on this theme park idea of the opportunity to individualize Pringles, and in addition, also on the two colours and flavours of Pringles Raspberry Dream and Soft Lemon!

Insofar, such a picture, in this case created as a photogram folded into itself, would potentially contain rather another kind of reality, a reality that would be difficult to achieve with a photo-realistic image, because it is situated somewhere below, above, or beside, not in what one really “de facto” sees. With the possibilities of a compacting abstraction, theoretically, what arise and are negotiated are scenarios or contexts that could be represented in another way than photo-realistically, but for this reason are not necessarily always less real-seeming.

*“The Western conception of history is that it has been characterized by man’s increasing understanding and mastery of the physical environment, by the progressive triumph of mind over matter. The evidence of human history seems to confirm our sense that abstract, intellectual, spiritual elements are superior to material and physical things. This has led inevitably to a hierarchical ordering that informs our apprehension and judgment of human activities and experiences.”*<sup>1</sup>

Although the text from which this quote comes is from 1982, and there has surely been some movement in this respect in the last thirty years, these clearly hierarchical cultural perspectives shaped by Platonic ideas nonetheless certainly still succinctly colour, more or less consciously, our thinking today, don’t they? Perhaps, however, what we see specifically in Seufert’s Pringles pictures and in the case of the tacos (“Untitled, Taco 2,” 2013), apparently exposed using a quite similar technique, the decorative feathers of the “Truth and Trust” series of 2014, or the brisk “Neu” works of 2015, and the two motifs “Farbstück #1” and “Farbstück #2” (Piece of Colour #1 & #2) is something like an ironically cryptic turning of the screws of the baser, material (LOW), and of the superior, cerebral (HIGH), which might once again make it possible to overcome such divisions. In place of a colour-metaphysics, as, for instance, in the work of Rupprecht Geiger, here, the most banal “material” from the megacloud of the consumer goods industry is transcended in an ironic turn with the help of the simplest means from the bag of tricks of analogue photography and laboratory techniques to become a colourful shadow of itself, Pringles-Spirit in the art universe, go ahead, there you have it. It nearly calls to mind Rhineland humor à la Sigmar Polke, but is simply more contemporary in origin. And those who then look again in order to see what kinds of stories are connected with such banal things, therefore at the objects that must still arguably have really existed physically at some point so as to be able to leave their traces behind as witnesses indexically on the photo paper, which is what still continues to constitute photography’s great appeal — therefore, those who in this case now take an exemplary look at the “Pringles” — they very quickly find themselves in the churning sea of the everyday consumer-goods and marketing insanity of a Procter & Gamble universe<sup>2</sup> (which as rumor has it, has already long since been part in turn of the even more gigantic multi Monsanto and will perhaps soon, very soon, be devoured by GOOOOOOOOGLE or one of the other gigantesque squids, but things haven’t yet gone that far, have they? But please take a look yourself, in the best case using Google itself;)).

8tung here comes Wiki 4u now, j4f:

*Pringles have been available in Germany since 1996. The following classic varieties are on offer: “Cheese & Onion”, “Hot*

*& Spicy” “Ketchup”, “Original”, “Classic Paprika (before 2013, only “Paprika”), “Sweet Paprika”, “Salt & Vinegar”, and “Sour Cream & Onion”, as well as “Texas BBQ Sauce”. In mid-2013, the new “XTRA” line replaced the temporarily available, spicier “Xtreme” edition. The corresponding varieties do not exclusively focus on spiciness, but do have a stronger taste in general as a result of more intense seasoning. The varieties “Spicy Chilli Sauce” and “Kickin’ Sour Cream & Onion” are, however, very similar to the former “Xtreme” varieties “Flamin’ Chilli Sauce” and “Spicy Sour Cream & Onion”. In addition, the “XTRA” varieties “Cheesy Nacho Cheese” and “Saucy BBQ” seem to be reworked versions of the “Xtreme” varieties “Exploding Cheese & Chilli” and “Take Away Smokin Ribs”. Furthermore, the varieties “Original”, “Classic Paprika”, and “Sour Cream & Onion” are also available as 40-g cans. Foreign flavors such as “Pizza”, “Peperoni”, or “Tomato & Mozzarella” were and are available at irregular intervals as limited editions.<sup>3</sup>*

WOW! WTF! What a text!

And moreover: *Ingredients: “Classic Paprika”: mashed potato powder, vegetable oil, vegetable fat, cornmeal, wheat starch, maltodextrin, emulsifier E471; dextrose, salt, yeast powder, rice flour, wheat flour, flavour enhancers: monosodium glutamate, disodium guanylate, and disodium inosinate; onion powder, paprika powder, colouring agent: paprika extract; garlic powder, aroma.*

*Tags: cholesterol-free, egg-free, nibbling, lactose-free, milk-free, Pringles, Pringles Paprika. Pure, vegetable, snack, vegan ...*

One current questions from the infinite vastness of the WWW: really vegan? Some consumers in blogs relating to the topic of Pringles ingredients are discussing whether there is *something pork-based* in them. Since the emulsifier E471 can be obtained from both plant-based as well as animal-based materials. The manufacturer claims that only vegetable fat is used for the emulsifier in this case, and pork-related ingredients are in any case not used in any of the varieties. Obviously, actually, because there would indeed otherwise also be some 1.5 billion fewer potential buyers.

If one would like, it would naturally also be possible to go deeper into the kinds of correlations that such images do indeed bring along with them like a comet trail, and it could then possibly also develop into a longer essay or even a novel, as the case may be, perhaps David Foster Wallace also arrived at the idea for his massive, monstrous novel *Infinite Jest*<sup>4</sup> in such a way. In it, there is, for instance, an alternative calendar system, because the Gregorian calendar has been abolished by the Organisation of North American Nations and replaced by a system of sponsors’ names — the years are called, for example, “Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar”, “Year of Dairy Products from the American Heartland”, or also the “Year of the Yushityu 2007 Mimetic-Resolution-Cartridge-View-Motherboard-Easy-To-Install-Upgrade For Infernatron/InterLace TP Systems for Home, Office, or Mobile”, and so on; a “Year of Raspberry Foam and Lemony Dream Pringles” would then not really attract attention there.

However — and this is indeed the beautiful thing about fascinating pictures, they are sometimes very simple, and one can also simply enjoy their surface quite “superficially” and then perhaps simply go on quite superficially — if one, however, takes a somewhat closer look and the “cinema of the mind” is turned on by the

picture, something can then also come bubbling in and out, even if one is already long since somewhere else, is therefore situated somewhere very different both temporally and spatially. And then such pictures and combinations of pictures as Stefanie Seufert produces them are simply also always a testimony to the fact that a purity in the dichotomy of “intellectual, spiritual” and “material, physical” naturally does not and cannot exist in any way. That the boundaries are permeable to both sides, that, for example, something of an intellectual achievement, thus SPIRIT, always also pervades such banal things, even if, as here in the case of the Tacos or Pringles, this spirit is completely determined by the ideology of marketing. And the fact that, conversely — in the case of the “Pringles” pictures naturally very obviously, but otherwise also nearly always in one way or the other — art naturally also has many banal and extremely banal parts, but without running the risk of inevitably being banal itself.

A whole series of different approaches is employed in Stefanie Seufert’s works. Experimental techniques in the laboratory such as the photograms, “very normal” photographs, hence exposures with a camera with a film (or a chip?) inside it, those shot “en plein air” somewhere outside, lit matter-of-factly and in a neutral way without shadows, objects photographed in the studio as if for a product catalogue, experiments only with light, time, and photo paper, photos of photos, and recently also abstract sculptures on exposed photo paper. What is always concerned, however, is achieving diverse shadings of alienation and/or abstraction with the means of photography. Of an alienation, or, as the case may be, an abstraction that only arises through the possibilities of framing, up to fields and gradations of colour created purely in the laboratory, which no longer bear any traces of objects, and thus radically reject photography’s task of representing — and that are then in part used once again in a physically “real” way, again become objects through serving as material for sculptures, which then, however, in turn have abstract forms. And soon then perhaps to turn the screw another round: to be photographed as a further reinterpretation? Or simply, in the meantime also again in a completely different way, through printing an object that has already once been photographed and is then once again photographed as a print, as, for instance, in the case of the picture “yet untitled #11”. Shot a bit obliquely from the side and in such a way that it is also possible to see the white border of the photo paper, as if someone quickly shot the photo in passing for remembrance, for instance at an exhibition, and avoided distracting reflections by using an oblique camera angle.

Details of colourful patchwork carpets that — as already the Pringles and Tacos, but also other of Seufert’s motifs — again play very directly with a reference to abstract painting. Four photos of all sides of a white baseball cap, which is printed densely, “allover”, with black letters, in which one first expectantly attempts to decipher what possibly stands there, until one has either found out, or reads the title: “HUI” is simply what stands there, and in one’s detective-like search for meaning, one somehow once again feels taken for a ride in a charming way, because simply precisely only that and nothing else can be read on the caps.

And I am sure that more and more possibilities of experimental techniques will continued to be tried and tested and also be included in her work, if it just fits in, because nothing is ruled out a priori, and also should not remain so; one notices that this is indeed, without wanting to overemphasise this, always also photography about photography and its physical characteristics,

its cultural attributions, and a game with the expectations that we inherently associate with it, and not one that adheres to a particular photographic dogma. With these works, the artist is elegantly navigating in a very specific peripheral zone in the ocean of possibilities of photography, and for a fascinating cartography of this area with all its shoals, references, and possibilities. As a further level, Seufert's artistic strategy also clearly includes the respectively very precise combinatorics of motifs among and between one another thanks to the, in part, very different techniques. Therefore, how exactly which motif hangs next to which, at what distance and in what context on a wall, or in space, for example in an exhibition or in this book: What comes together here in what size on a two-page spread, what must stand alone, which and how many motifs from one series, which picture comes after which. Beyond the individual motif, the conversations that Stefanie Seufert's motifs conduct with one another before our eyes are surely just as important a moment for her work as the conversations, discussions, debates, or also flirtations that they conduct with those of other (photo) artists, or non-artists. The pictures respectively have to be precisely assembled anew again in each context so that "mirror images" and "shadows" arise and are piled up ever anew, the comet tail always travels new orbits, and we are again and again able to lose ourselves in all of this anew.

A poetic list, in contrast to a practical list, is always potentially infinite, says Umberto Eco.

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- 1 Jules David Prown, *Mind in Matter An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- 2 The Procter & Gamble Company, since 1837, a US-American consumer goods corporation represented in seventy countries with its headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio; 118,000 employees, 83,062 million US Dollars (financial year: 2014).
- 3 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pringles>
- 4 David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, Boston, 1996.