

ArtReview

medium, which tends towards the lonesome and the absurd – and, aptly for Ungerer, often emphasises human/animal hybrids, neither fully one thing nor another.

‘Have technical devices, originally designed to satisfy our desires, enslaved us already, or will they enslave us in the future? Or rather, do they open new ways of thinking, acting and creating?’ Search us. Still, that’s the animating inquiry of **6** *The Promise of Total Automation*. The 36-artist group show at Kunsthalle Wien takes the time-span from Fordism to the Internet of Things as a backdrop for practices in which ubiquitous mechanisation is not necessarily a calamity but, at best, an opportunity, a counterpoint to ‘improvisation and a sense of wonder’ that perhaps even makes explicit how necessary those human qualities are. A cross-generational affair that stretches from Thomas Bayrle to

Cécile B. Evans via, among others, Athanasios Argianas, Mark Leckey, Magali Reus, Peter Halley and Melanie Gilligan, *The Promise...* ought to illuminate not only where we’re at but also how we – and those robot waiters now entertaining diners in the Far East – got there.

7 *Art Sheffield* takes place in a city famously retooled by industry – specifically its material relationship with steel – and then transformed again by the fallout of the postindustrial era. That’s a process which artistic director Martin Clark, who now directs Bergen Kunsthall but studied in Sheffield and curated his first show there, is marking by setting works by his chosen artists (including Trisha Donnelly, Florian Hecker, Beatrice Gibson, Charles Atlas, Richard Sides, Hannah Sawtell and Michel Auder) in not only the city’s institutions, but also suggestive sites including electricity substations and

former industrial buildings per se. Expect, amid this, a focus on what grew out of the South Yorkshire city in the Thatcherite/Cold War era, particularly the electronic music scene of the 1980s, from Cabaret Voltaire et al to Warp Records, and the politicised scratch video contemporaneous with it. Expect too that the locations, each spotlighting a single artist, will add up to what Clark calls ‘an exploded group show, exploring the dream life of the city’.

Brazilian-born and Goldsmiths-educated, **8** *Erika Verzutti* neither hews to tropes of tropical modernism nor fabrication-driven conceptualism. Instead, as *Swan, cucumber, dinosaurs* at Pivô, São Paulo, will confirm via four sculptures dating from 2003 to the present, she’s a confident fantasist, delving into both the past and a pastoral imaginary. Her small sculptures in concrete and bronze nestle little egglike forms



6 Magali Reus, *Leaves (Amber Line, May)*, 2015.
Photo: Plastiques Photography.
Courtesy the artist and the Approach, London



7 George Barber, *Absence of Satan* (still), 1985,
video, 4 min 50 sec. Courtesy the artist and LUX, London



8 Erika Verzutti, *Swan with Stage*, 2015 (installation view, Sculpture Center, New York, 2015),
styrofoam, iron, polyurethane, fiberglass, acrylic, 369 × 350 × 350 cm.
Photo: Jason Mandella. Courtesy Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo