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No palm trees!

Representations of Bodies *without Bodies*

What makes an artistic visual representation ‚queer‘? My wider project is to develop methods and terms of a queer art theory, which involves desire and sexuality as a main focus.

The considerations of ‚No palm trees‘ concentrate on an installation by the artist Felix Gonzalez Torres. His work *represents* bodies, but it disclaims to explicitly *show* bodies, which are supposed to visually demonstrate a deviation from the norm. My analysis of Gonzalez-Torres‘ work instead introduces the terms ‚desire‘, ‚phantasy‘ and ‚queer spatial sex‘ (‚queerer Raumsex‘), not as something being represented in the work, but as a ‚method‘ (Probyn 1996) between work, space and spectators; a method of building and cutting connections (here towards ‚conceptual art‘, ‚AIDS-politics‘, ‚camp and queer aesthetics‘) of creating and disrupting belongings. The analysis is thus built on the hypothesis, that a disruption of dominant representations not only depends on a certain quality of an image or a text, but is in fact dependent on certain social constellations. Reference is made to Amy Robinson’s model of a ‚triangular theatre of identities‘ (Robinson 1994, also cf. Sieg 2002). Following this model, a group of spectators may produce a social constellation called ‚in-group‘, that is able to read practices as queer sexuality, while viewers that do not belong to this group may for example read the same practices – passing as conceptual art – only in relation to positions of art history. The thesis is that the ‚representations of bodies without bodies‘ represent the desire for different, plural, not clearly delimited subjectivities, outside the ideals of binary genders, heterosexuality and being-American.