



Born in Leningrad, former Soviet Union, 1970. Lives and works in Vienna, Austria and Karlsruhe, Germany **Selected Solo Exhibitions:** **2000** 'Anna Jermolaewa', Institute of Visual Arts, Milwaukee **2002** 'Anna Jermolaewa', Centre d'Art, Neuchâtel; Ursula-Blickle-Stiftung, Kraichtal-Unteröwisheim, Germany **2004** Museum Moderner Kunst, Passau, Germany **2006** Gallery Mezzanin, Vienna **Selected Group Exhibitions:** **1999** 'dAPERTutto (APERTO over ALL)', Venice Biennale **2000** 'Lives and Works in Vienna', Kunsthalle, Vienna **2001** 'Ars 01', Kiasma, Helsinki; 'Recent acquisitions', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam **2006** 'Light Works', Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna **Selected Bibliography:** **2000** Harald Szeemann, 'The Expertise', *Welt am Sonntag*, nr. 14 **2002** Vanessa Joan Müller, 'Anna Jermolaewa', *Non-Places*, Frankfurter Kunstverein; Gerald Matt (ed), 'Anna Jermolaewa – Big Sister', *The Five Year Plan* **2003** James Trainor, 'Anna Jermolaewa at Johann Koenig', *Art in America*, June; Joshua Decker, 'Fucking Around with Video', *Flash Art*, January - February

Anna Jermolaewa deals with repetition, thus engaging with a topic that has been a major focus of theoretical thought in the twentieth century, the age of mass reproduction, cinema and psychoanalysis. In Jermolaewa's short video loops, which are always focused on the idea of compulsive repetition, iteration is simultaneously a technical method, a subject and a symptom.

This theme was already apparent in Jermolaewa's first video, **Hendl Triptych** (1998), which shows three chickens twirling on a rotisserie across three TV screens. The monotonous movement and golden tints of roasting flesh mesmerize and hold the spectator spellbound. The everyday character of this action, which can be seen regularly in food stores, is denied by means of its eternal repetition.

In Jermolaewa's works, repeated movement becomes a traumatic event. The Chinese tumblers in **3' Survival Attempts** (2000) balance on an incline and eventually fall down. The battery-driven rabbit in the three-minute video loop entitled **Solo** (1999) finally reaches an obstacle that it cannot overcome – namely, the video camera. In **go ... go ... go ... go ...** (2005) battery-powered dolls – a metaphor for modern humanity – float on a raft, surrounded by a clichéd exotic paradise and accompanied by the alarming sound of their own automated voices. Their mechanical movements invoke anxiety and suspicion, notions of disease or perhaps of social control.

While these inanimate beings produce human-like convulsive gestures, live flesh in Jermolaewa's work operates like a mechanism. The ascending/descending penis in **On/off** (1999) operates the light switch in a room. In **Blumenbeet** (2001) a penis alternately becomes erect and flaccid while being watered with a sprinkler, while in **Curvy** (2002) the nude female body (Jermolaewa's) becomes an ideal site for a toy-car race.

Humour, sexuality and convulsive aggression intermix in one of the artist's most recent works, **Kiss** (2006): two Mickey Mouse masks try to kiss each other and both are destroyed in the process. Aggression is also central to Jermolaewa's hard-hitting autobiographical performance **Shooting** (2001), which refers through its subject matter to the history of video art. In the two-screen video presentation we see the artist shooting her first video camera with a pistol from two different points of view. The first is that of a spectator, at whom the artist seems to aim; the second allows us to see both the artist and the spectators.

In the video **Research for Sleeping Positions** (2006) Jermolaewa attempts, without success, to find a comfortable sleeping position in Vienna's railway station. More symbolically, she searches for a compromise impossible in a society that paradoxically, yet practically, takes pains to arrange benches at railway stations for the sake of comfort while at the same time making them impossible places on which to sleep. \* **Olesya Turkina**