



Kathrin Sonntag

Problems and Solutions

November 9 – December 22, 2017

Opening reception: Thursday, November 9, 6-8:30pm

"In the Hollywood movie *Apollo 13*, a group of scientists and engineers manage to square the circle in an emergency situation: three astronauts in space are in danger of suffocating because of an exploded oxygen tank and a defective air filter. Despite all precautions and careful planning the engineers are faced with the problem of finding a way to connect the air filter systems of the space shuttle and the lunar landing craft (one of which is circular and the other square), and succeed by using basic tools. In the high-tech showpiece space shuttle, the three astronauts' lives are saved with the help of a piece of cardboard, a urine pouch, a tennis sock and adhesive tape. This scene illustrates the mechanism of provisional solutions: depending on the means available in the given circumstances, they are the result of the motivation to act in an unforeseen emergency and the decision: this is how we're going to tackle this problem for the time being."¹

Thomas Erben Gallery is excited to present its first solo exhibition with German artist, Kathrin Sonntag, whose practice encompasses photography, sculpture, film, and installation. Her work

¹ 1. Antje Havemann & Margit Schild. "'You Can Use My Tights' or: The Phenomenon of Temporary Solutions." *Landscape Research*, Vol. 32, no. 1 (February 2007): 45-55.

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was last exhibited in New York at the Guggenheim's [Photo-Poetics](#) during winter 2015/16.

Playfully disrupting viewers' perception, Sonntag's work sows confusion across space, time, object, and architecture, blurring the line between photography and reality. Her exhibitions frequently incorporate the sites her works are exhibited at, using life-sized photographic wallpaper and careful installation to transfigure the exhibition space into a zone of heightened perception.

With *Problem and Solutions*, an ongoing photography series by the artist, Sonntag has been documenting examples of makeshift solutions made by ordinary people for quotidian problems. The photographs capture a provisional character — ad-hoc, inventive, sometimes crude solutions that Sonntag wryly chronicles, speaking to the (immediate) questions of life.

Bearing the same name, Sonntag's exhibition itself ultimately shares this provisional appeal. Working at the gallery for the show during August, Sonntag photographed a range of whimsical setups, using objects at hand in the gallery to display a selection of images from her series. The results were transferred 1:1 to photographic wallpapers, which — displayed with corresponding objects — reenter the gallery's space.

By creating unusual solutions to the problem of presenting *Problems and Solutions*, the installation echoes the makeshift character documented in the photographs, redoubling: *this is how we're going to tackle this problem for the time being*.

Kathrin Sonntag (b. 1981) lives and works in Berlin. Solo shows include Neuer Aachener Kunstverein; Aspen Art Museum, Colorado; Kunstverein Hamburg; Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen; and Swiss Institute, New York. Sonntag's work has been included in group exhibitions at Fotografie Forum Frankfurt; Kunstverein Hannover; the Third Moscow International Biennial for Young Art; Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach; and Sculpture Center, New York, among others. Most recently her work was included in Photo Poetics, Guggenheim Museum, New York, and shown in a solo presentation at Art Basel Hong Kong

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