

## Enzyklopädie der Handhabungen: Braiding Gazes

Kneading, grinding, drilling, plugging, embossing, folding, sealing, shaping. Anette Rose scrutinizes the coordination between the eye and the hand, between facial expressions and physical gestures, on which manual or mechanized production is based. Since 2006, the German artist has been involved in an ambitious inventory project, an “encyclopedia of manual operations” which she presents as variously configured video installations. Through sequences she calls “modules,” Rose observes the routine, eventless human labour that takes place within artisanal, manufacturing, and laboratory environments, drawing attention to how bodies and tools are interconnected. The actual produced object is secondary to the act of producing it: we see workers (sometimes in teams) become automatons through the repetition of their movements that then transform their materials; we see a machine use anthropomorphic motions to make forms appear. From one module to the next, Rose builds a unique archive of non-verbal skills that often involve instruction and practice (for both humans and machines), but are then *automatically* carried out, whether through programming or through reflex.

Encyclopedias are all about method. Rose’s practice is impressively rigorous and consistent. Her filming process systematically involves two cameras that film the worker’s face and hands separately from different angles, and the footage is then edited and synchronized in postproduction. By separating the body as a whole to focus on the choreography of gesture, framing plays a key role as an analytical tool in the artist’s experimental visual anthropology. In addition to her videos, still images titled *Set Photos* sometimes reveal the filming equipment that surrounds the activity being shot, like a second layer woven between human and machine. No commentary, narrative, or words distract from these observations—unless the activity involves “storytelling” (in fact, it was while

filming the non-verbal expressions of people telling stories that Rose, as a student, first developed her system). The uniformity of her method places each activity on a level playing field: the kneading of bread dough is juxtaposed with the machine fabrication of a shaving brush, while the making of a blown glass object echoes the mass production of porcelain plates. Everything is there, visible, across multiple screens, monitors, and projections that, together, form a spatial kaleidoscope.

With about thirty modules completed to date, Rose is invested in a genre closely associated to photography: typology. However, working with video elicits a visual approach that is at the antithesis of the archetype found in canonical examples of the genre, such as August Sander’s *Face of Our Time*, or Bernd and Hilla Becher’s *Anonymous Sculptures*, which form an inventory of architectural constructions on the verge of obsolescence. The moving image loop creates a relationship with time and repetition, not with what’s distinctive; it relates to metamorphosis rather than identification, which in turn, generates a nearly hypnotic visual experience. It is less about quickly grasping a “type” than letting oneself be transported, absorbed, even soothed by the rhythm of work—and therefore slipping into a trance where image, sound, and movement reconstruct the tactile intelligence of skill and knowledge.

The exhibition at Dazibao brings together several modules (nos. 20 to 33) around the activity of “weaving.” The videos were filmed in different contexts, including an artist residency at the RWTH Aachen Institute for Textile Technology; at Eschke, a silk manufacturer in Crimmitschau, in Saxony; and at the Berlin Zoological Garden. In this group of modules, the metamorphosis of the line and the motif are the common thread: a radial braiding machine interlaces carbon fibres in space; on an automated Jacquard loom, the rhythmic movement

fig. 1, 9–12 *Nest Building*, 2023  
Multimedia installation  
© Anette Rose,  
VG Bild-Kunst (Bonn)

2–3 *Pattern in Motion*, 2017  
*Enzyklopädie der Handhabungen*  
Modul #29.1–29.2  
*seidenweben – automatisiert*  
Two-channel HD video  
installation, colour,

stereo sound, 2 × 11 min 3 s  
© Anette Rose,  
VG Bild-Kunst (Bonn)

4 *Captured Motion*, 2016  
*Enzyklopädie der Handhabungen*  
Modul #22 *flechten –*  
*Maibaumtanz*  
Slide projection, variable  
dimensions. Archival photo,  
1920. Courtesy of the

Oregon State University  
Special Collections and  
Archives Research Center  
(Corvallis)

5–8 *Captured Motion*, 2016  
*Enzyklopädie der Handhabungen*  
Modul #20.1–20.2  
*flechten – automatisiert*  
Two-channel HD video  
installation, colour,

stereo sound,  
49 s and 3 min 45 s  
© Anette Rose,  
VG Bild-Kunst (Bonn)

of silk threads produces not only fabric with a complex floral design, but also a captivating image of the binary arithmetical operations that are the foundation of digital technologies; our anthropocentric perspective shifts as captive weaver birds braid their nests. In each module, the synchronous dance of threads draws a

transverse arc from the most highly advanced human-made technology to the immemorial techniques of birds building their nests. Rose, in turn, weaves her work through the gallery space, inviting us to explore the continuum of techniques that, throughout the living world, transform materials into a second skin.



fig. 1

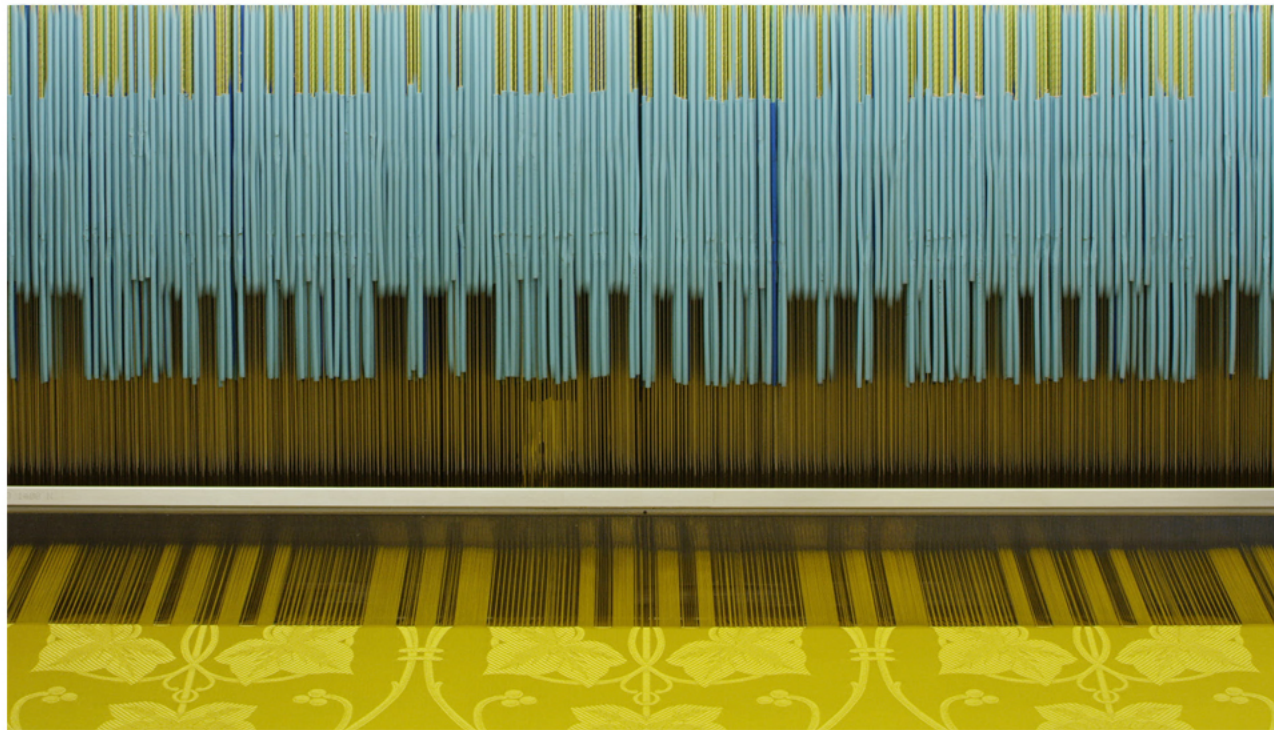
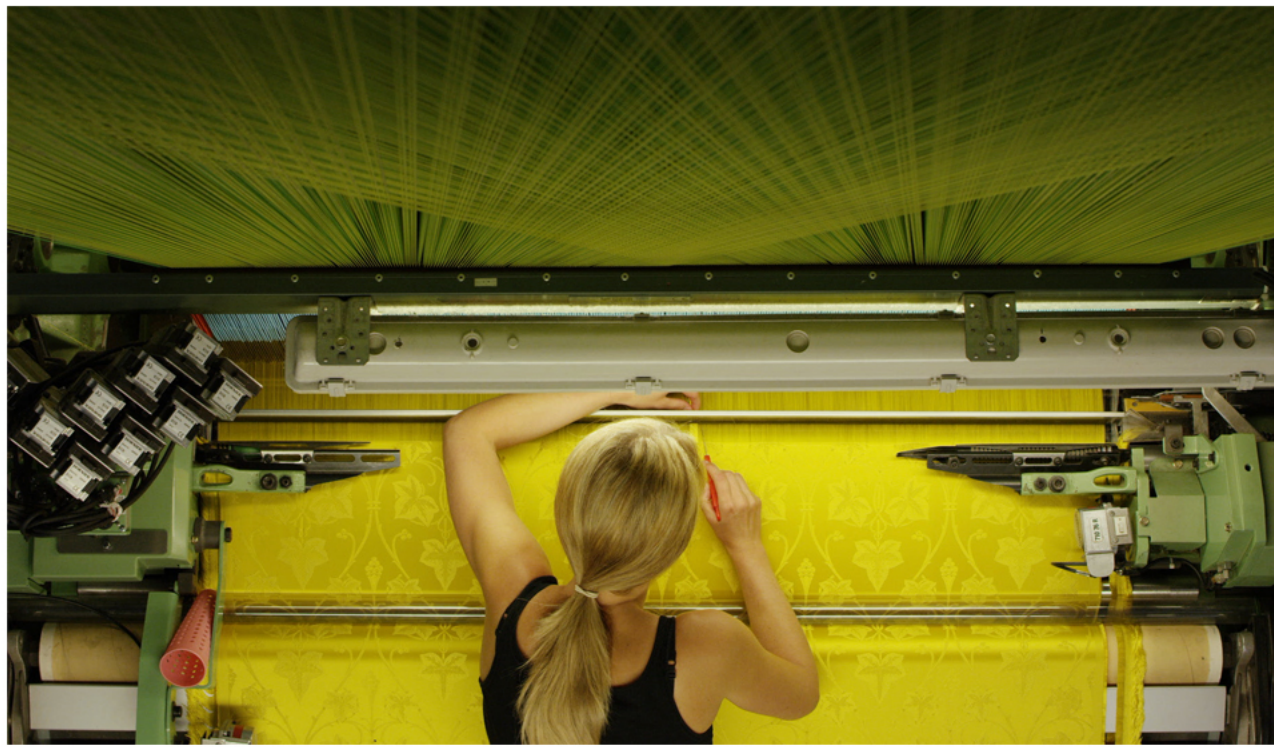


fig. 2-3



fig. 4

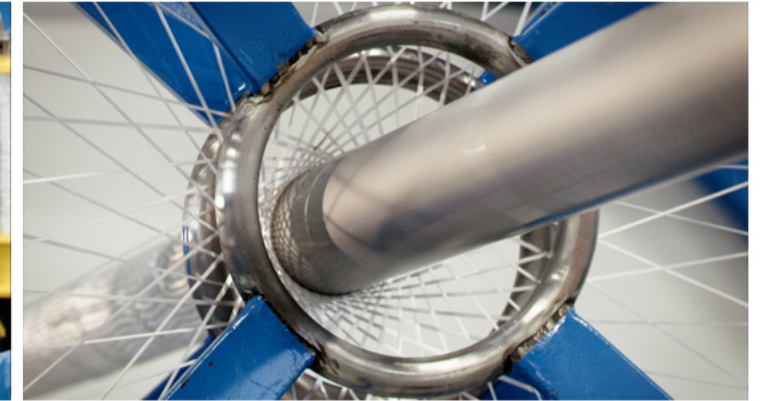
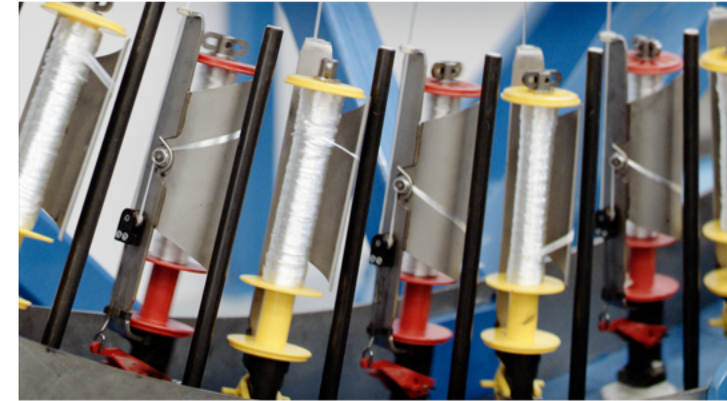


fig. 5-8



fig. 9-12