

THE SCHIRN IS PRESENTING A MAJOR EXHIBITION OF VIDEO ART BY TURNER PRIZE WINNER ELIZABETH PRICE

## ELIZABETH PRICE SOUND OF THE BREAK

MARCH 23 – MAY 29, 2023

PRESS PREVIEW: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023, 11 A.M.

Elizabeth Price (\*1966) makes transformations of the digital visible. The artist creates moving-image works, composing visuals, text, and sound to form spatial installations that restage cultural and sociopolitical events and focus attention on largely unnoticed stories. From March 23 to May 29, 2023, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt is presenting a major solo exhibition by the Turner Prize winner, including both new and recent works that are being shown for the first time in Germany. Price's moving-image works are grounded in a conceptual approach. Each of her videos is the result of meticulous research and a wide-ranging examination of archives and collections of material. In the course of her digital appropriation, Price develops new narratives from art objects and documents of historical events. Initially working with PowerPoint, and now with a professional video-editing program, the artist creates moving-image films that combine photographs, archival materials, documents, text, graphics, animation, and sound to form new contexts. A key component of these works is their deployment of sound in space. The visual and sonic narrative is created through the acoustic atmosphere of a technological-synthetic voice-over. The hierarchical world of work's transformation through digitization is a recurring theme, in particular the rise of information work, office activities, and administration. Price's videos raise questions about power, gender, value, and language, situating them in the shared space of technology and culture.

The Schirn shows two expansive installations, each with two corresponding video works: *A RESTORATION* (2016) and *FELT TIP* (2018), as well as *UNDERFOOT* (2022) and *NIGHT OF THE WORLD* (2023). In addition, four video lectures on view provide insights into the artist's working process.

The exhibition "Elizabeth Price: SOUND OF THE BREAK" is supported by the Friends of the Schirn Kunsthalle e.V., with additional support from the British Council.

Dr. Sebastian Baden, director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, emphasizes: "Elizabeth Price's artistic work focuses on the fine print of the information age. With her elaborate moving-image films, the artist challenges the logic of linear narration, traditional systems of order, and common evaluations of work, gender, power, and social visibility. Price is interested in the rereading of data, the observation of marginal notes and secondary information. Through her specific process of digital deconstruction and retelling, her videos allow for polyphonic new perspectives on social structures."

Matthias Ulrich, curator of the exhibition, on the artist: "Elizabeth Price forms her elaborate video, or rather moving-image works into multi-layered narrative architectures. She assembles these from a number of individual voices—both acoustic and visual—and from a variety of sources. Whether recording, arranging, or reassembling, it is the process of digitization that distinguishes her work. Sound in particular plays a crucial role for the artist, as the title of the exhibition already declares. She thus makes markers in her art in order to emphasize changes, decisions, and consequences, both formally and politically."

## OVERVIEW OF THE WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

The Schirn presents four video works by Elizabeth Price, arranged in two three-dimensional installations set opposite each other.

The video *A RESTORATION* (Two-channel video, 2016, 19 min., commissioned by the Contemporary Art Society for the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) has been developed by Price on the basis of the image archives of the Ashmolean and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. The focus is on photographs, drawings, and paintings that Sir Arthur Evans, archaeologist and first director of the Ashmolean, made or commissioned during his restoration of the Bronze Age city of Knossos on the island of Crete. With the help of these digitized documents, Price retells the story from the administration's point of view. She creates a chorus of digital workers that guides us, based on the digital artifacts, through Evans's project in a single, combined synthetic narrative voice. This chorus satirically reconstructs the restoration of the ancient city from a different perspective. The title of the Schirn exhibition refers to the breaking of a glass goblet at the end of the video—a break that marks a moment of transition.

*FELT TIP* (Two-channel video, 2018, 10 min., commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, London, Nottingham Contemporary, and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis) takes as its point of departure a collection of men's ties from the 1970s and 1980s. Their designs incorporate the imagery of computer networks, interfaces, and memory chips. Various references are made to the information technology that revolutionized the office workplace, and to the shared technological and persistently hierarchical history of woven textiles and computer technology. Price further extends the history of data storage to an imagined future: administrators at a company describe how billions of bytes of documents and data are fed into the cells in their fingertips to be stored in their DNA. All the while, questions of executive power, authorship, digital inscription, and oral history are discussed.

*UNDERFOOT* (Two-channel video, 2022, 14 min., commissioned by the Hunterian Gallery and Panel, Glasgow) is set in the sprawling reading rooms of the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, one of the largest lending libraries in Europe. The narrative is based on photographs taken shortly before its opening in 1981. They document the architecture and interior design of the late modern building. Two nameless narrators guide us through the still empty building on the basis of the pictures. The tour focuses with increasing intensity on materials such as the hardwood veneers and decorative rugs that line the reading rooms so as to dampen acoustics. The geometric modernist interior of the library is described following Gothic precedents. The second part of the work offers insights into a collection available in the library of floral patterns for spool carpet looms.

With *NIGHT OF THE WORLD* (Single-channel video, 2023, 20 min.), the Schirn presents a version of the video *WEST HINDER* (2012, commissioned by Film London), updated especially for this exhibition. It is dedicated to the ship *Tricolor*, which sank in December 2002 in an area of the English Channel called West Hinder, located between the British Isles and mainland Europe. It details a fantasy narrative in which the ship's cargo of 2896 luxury cars acquires a kind of consciousness. Their "intelligent vehicle control systems" develop a language derived from user manuals and press releases. As a chorus of synthetic voices, the vehicles address viewers through moving graphics on the screen. They provide maps and select the music soundtrack. In the final phase of the video, the narrative eventually evolves into a lyrical form.

# SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT

Between the two video installation rooms, the Schirn also presents four video lectures that Price created during the lockdown measures of the Covid-19 pandemic. Shown for the first time in an exhibition setting at the Schirn, these provide an in-depth examination of the artist's methods and motifs.

In *THE CHORUS AND THEIR MEMORY* (2020, 23 min.), Price focuses largely on her work *FELT TIP* (2018), in which she analyzes the complex production processes and social histories of textiles. She specifically looks at a series of ties that appear to be adorned with the image of a computer chip instead of a historical, institutional crest, in turn exploring different notions of cultural memory.

*A GOTHIC CHOIR: THE TOTAL WORK* (2021, 16 min.) is the first of three lectures in which Price explores the significance of the medieval architectural form of the Gothic choir in the development of her own language of expression in moving-image art. Polyphony and the dramatic chorus are recurring themes, for instance in Price's use of narratives performed by multiple voices. They tend to embody different archival and technological sources, forming the basis for the development of a heterogeneous audiovisual composition.

In the lecture *A GOTHIC CHOIR: PLANS AND ELEVATIONS* (2021, 17 min.), Price explores the similarities of the Gothic choir's architecture with other architectures of administration, culture, and politics. She further relates the choir to systems of knowledge organization such as libraries and museums. There is particular focus on her video work *A RESTORATION* (2016) and the digital collections of historical photographs and documents on which the work is based. Price explains the methods she uses to reorganize the vast amounts of this material.

In the final lecture in the series, *A GOTHIC CHOIR: SONG AND DANSE* (2021, 18 min.), Price looks at revivals of the Gothic period and its lasting influence on notions of embodied performance and voice, up through recent audio technology.

**Elizabeth Price**, born in 1966 in Bradford, Yorkshire, studied at the Royal College of Art, London, and Leeds University. She now lives and works in London. Her work has been shown internationally in major group exhibitions. Her most recent solo exhibitions were, among others, at Artangel, London; Tate Britain, London; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf; Index Gallery, Stockholm; the Musée d'art Contemporain, Montreal; the Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid; the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow; the Hunterian Gallery, Glasgow; and Panel, Edinburgh. Price has received numerous awards, including the Turner Prize in 2012 and the Contemporary Art Society Annual Award in 2013. She is currently Professor of Film and Photography at Kingston School of Art, UK.

**CATALOG** *Elizabeth Price: SOUND OF THE BREAK*, ed. by Matthias Ulrich, with contributions by Elizabeth Price, Matthias Ulrich, and Blake Williams, and a foreword by the director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Sebastian Baden, German/English edition, 288 pages, approx. 220 illustrations, 16 x 21 cm, softcover, Mousse Publishing, ISBN 978-8-8674-9570-2, €24 (Schirn), €30 (bookstores).

**ARTIST TALK** On Tuesday May 16, 2023, at 7:30 p.m., Elizabeth Price and Schirn curator Matthias Ulrich will talk about the works and the conception of the exhibition. Admission free, limited number of participants, reservation in the online shop at [schirn.de/shop](https://schirn.de/shop), remaining tickets at the Schirn box office on the day of the event.

# SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT

**LOCATION** SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, 60311 Frankfurt am Main  
**DURATION** March 23 – May 29, 2023 **INFORMATION** [www.schirn.de](http://www.schirn.de) **EMAIL**  
[welcome@schirn.de](mailto:welcome@schirn.de) **TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-0 **TICKETS** at the Schirn online store and at  
the Schirn box office **ADMISSION** €10, reduced €8, free admission for children under 8 years  
**GUIDED TOURS** Individual guided tours for groups can be booked now at  
[fuehrungen@schirn.de](mailto:fuehrungen@schirn.de) **VISITOR INFORMATION** all information about visiting us at  
[www.schirn.de/en/visit/faq](http://www.schirn.de/en/visit/faq) **CURATOR** Matthias Ulrich, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt  
**CURATORIAL ASSISTANT** Marie Oucherif **SUPPORTED BY** Friends of the Schirn Kunsthalle  
e.V. **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT** British Council **TECHNOLOGICAL PARTNER** Samsung  
Electronics

**HASHTAGS** #PRICE #SCHIRN **FACEBOOK, TWITTER, YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM,**  
**PINTEREST, TIKTOK, SCHIRN MAGAZINE** [www.schirn.de/en/magazin](http://www.schirn.de/en/magazin)

**PRESS** Johanna Pulz (Head of Press/PR), Julia Bastian (Deputy Head of Press/PR), Thea Stroh  
(Trainee) **SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT** Römerberg, 60311 Frankfurt am Main  
**TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-148 **EMAIL** [presse@schirn.de](mailto:presse@schirn.de)