

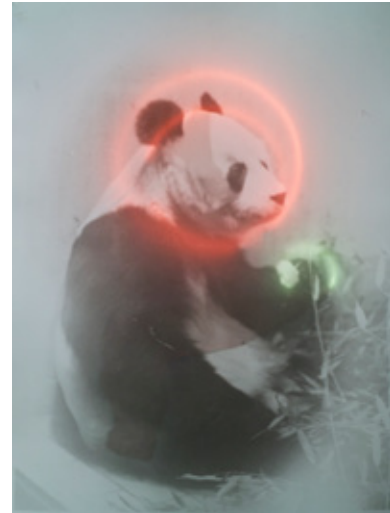
# TRANSFORMATIONS

In *Transformations*, AKINCI assembles a number of works that involve ideas of change and growth, both in the works themselves as in the artistic process that precedes them. Subtle shifting, metamorphosis, and the act of becoming or unbecoming create a peculiar dynamic in visuals and energy.

On a formal level, the idea of transformation is inevitably manifest in the work of German artist duo **Wiebke Grösch** (1970) & **Frank Metzger** (1969). Their artistic practice is based on research techniques such as mapping, comparative analysis, interviews, statistics, historical and biographical investigation, which they use to design specific strategies for the images they create. Often, contradictory materials such as plants and iron or plaster reveal a delicate dependency between extremes. In their 'Untitled' leaf cubes (2014), for instance – an utterly precise pile of fig leaves, Grösch & Metzger balance fixed, solid geometric shapes with the unpredictable process of decay.

**Basir Mahmood** (1985, Pakistan), currently artist in residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, applies his own strategy to prompt the films he makes: carefully staged and mostly shot in his home country, Mahmood plots situations that remain in a state of limbo between fiction and reality. His film 'Thank you for coming' (2013) is exemplary of this approach, for which Mahmood invited relatives and friends to a supposed celebration without any obvious occasion. His guests linger remotely, eating a plate of food that is offered to them, sometimes performing gestures that are clearly choreographed, other times seemingly improvising in their intentionally undefined presence. Mahmood's earlier work 'Lunda Bazaar' (2010), a video shot in Lahore's busy second-hand clothing market, shows a more formal transformation that occurs when a piece of clothing moves from one body to another, from one culture to another. In diffused slow-motion, the film captures a succession of men and one woman trying on clothes – typically from the United Kingdom or the United States, but also Korea, Japan, and India – originally fabricated for a different climate and other fashion trends. The garments transform in the act of wearing, retaining their original past while at the same time they become new again.

Melanie Bonajo, *Völkerschau: Panda*, 2010, print on roman paper, 93 x 73 cm



The notion of time and its transforming force is also apparent in the work of **Stéphanie Saadé** (1983, Lebanon). Often springing from something familiar and every-day, her artistic practice is defined by rendering a given state to transcend the time, material or shape that once defined it. The question how to measure growth and transformation is central and expressed with touching simplicity, as in 'The Shape of Distance' (2016) for which Saadé welded the legs of a pupil's table and chair with brass to reach the size of a professor's table and chair. In her 'Moongold' series (2015) the idea of transformation is expressed by gilded crescents in casual snapshots of the sky at nightfall, ascribing a value both measurable in materiality as well as in its semiotics.

Another ruffling of semiotics is encountered in an early series of photographs by **Melanie Bonajo** (1978, NL), which she created under the title 'Völkerschau' (2010). Depicting hazy images of different beasts, Bonajo draws parallels between ideas of early colonialism, zoo-keeping, and human attitudes towards animals, echoing into a future in which animals no longer exist and have permanently moved into a sphere of symbols. Retouched with colourful hues, sparkles and halo's, the photographs become an imagined sanctuary that fuses ghosts of the past with ghosts of the future.

The route through *Transformations* is concluded with new work by **Persijn Broersen** (1974, NL) & **Margit Lukács** (1973, NL). AKINCI is proud to present the premiere of their spectacular film titled 'Double Mirror' (2017), with music by Gwendolyn Thomas & Berend Dubbe. Broersen & Lukács show an amalgam of words and objects, materials and textures, matter and anti-matter, circulating in a fluid state of continuous metamorphosis.