

**GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN
ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER**

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Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder

assistants of the void / assistenten der leere

TOYEN, AHMED MORSI, SOPHIE PODOLSKI, KATINKA BOCK, JUNE CRESPO

Kurator: Adam Budak

13 SEP – 25 OCT 2019

a void lurks through and behind the cosmic window of roberto bolaño's final words of "the savage detectives" polyphonic travelogue; an abyss outlined by a progression of empty spaces, devouring one another, like the lives of poets in pursuit of immortality and transcendence; such is an interrupted cycle, a circularity in question, a loop in cul-de-sac, operating through gaps and incompleteness, in-between the galaxies, "a disproportionate ocean of emptiness". suspended in a vacuum, within a potentiality and under a pressure of a deficit and lack, we rehearse an alphabet of errors and imposed excess; spasm, not breath; absence, not expectation; towards the visceral, the visceral realism.

"i am an unfinished poem", declares sophie podolski. "true imagination", bolaño completes with sarcasm, "is that which destroys, elucidates, injects emerald microbes into other imaginations". the visceral realism is "a love letter, the demented strutting of a dumb bird in the moonlight, something essentially cheap and meaningless", or in other words, "a philosophy of the remainder, of remains, of incomplete burials, of forms of life animated by forces of death (and vice versa)", an ultimate (and probably most vicious) circulation of mental and corporeal matter, a flow of disconnected particles in a disenchanted universe of a failed science. disfunction and disbelief levitate, challenging a void of a desiring machine; longing, forgetting, disappearing resist the system and the substance. fulfillment and alienation oscillate in a vertigo of contradictory sensations.

this exhibition doesn't take circulation for granted though; it questions the everything flows mantra. it rejects circularity too; we ain't perfect. the linear system has failed (us); we inhabit a pause, an interruption, a disconnection. lines do not meet as we live parallel lives; lives that do not match, passwords that keep expiring, invalid codes that take over the everyday routine; air gets toxic, fluids explode. we're erased subjects. "I'm a chattering blackbird", podolski chants, "I'm a puddle of oil - I'm a child sitting on the floor waiting to be rewarded. ... (we are never more than assistants of the void)." with her life and work, sophie podolski, born stateless, embodied visceral realists' "momen-tary disconnection from a certain kind of reality". poétesse maudite, her uninhibited writing is an uncanny testimony of a schizoid mind; her fantastical drawings and prints, a portrayal of a corporeal and mental entanglement and subversiveness. prodigy writer and autodidact genius artist, podolski is (a version of) "artaud's van gogh, a woman suicided by society". out of a shadow and a well of absence, her visionary language and unique persona define a void generated by volcanic upheavals

of 1960s counterculture and its anti-authoritarian, anti-conformist attitudes and identity politics, a void morphed into the artist-writer's own mythology of a resilient and resistant subject.

toyen, born marie čermínová, a galaxy of his/her own, hopelessly pursued forensics of unleashed imagination towards eccentricity and disruption. denouncing artistic and social hypocrisy, toyen's art reflects libidinal excess and political transgression. advocating the so called 'artificialism' as an alternative to surrealism in the late 1920s, toyen believed in "an abstract consciousness of reality defined by poetic perceptions of memories." toyen's is a painterly *l'écriture du désastre*: a sublime diagnosis of the 20th century's anxiety, sadness and angst; here, in this prophetic vision, history is perceived as an interrupted loop of failure and progress; a world is about to collapse, and a subjectivity in ruins celebrates the end of times in a hallucinatory masquerade of the real and the imaginary, where dream and a nightmare collide and merge.

the primordial desire fills up ahmed morsi's theatrical tableaux; a suspense of sorts accompanies aborted attempts to relate or proclaim. levitating figures - bizarrely human and archaically non-human - are silent witnesses of a carnivalesque fest in a soulless world of the virtual; time is frozen, and empty shores are a vague memory of once familiar places: morsi's are hibernated protagonists on the abandoned stage of a post-apocalyptic *theatrum mundi*, (dis)engaged in a debate on grande narratives under a supervisory eye of an unknown god. "perception opens by means of an ethic-aesthetic carried to the limit", infra-realists-cum-visceral-realists believe, "forms of life and forms of death pass daily through the retina (...) THE EYE OF TRANSITION", they conclude. morsi, the poet and the painter, portrays the phantoms of our civilization on a stormy night of a spiritual upheaval. katinka bock's is a sincere pursuit of the sensual at the edge of its exhaustion. squeezed, embraced (violated?) forms, empty vessels and broken parts, parts that do not match are the relics of betrayed senses, agencies of post-romantic affect. gestural and performative, bock's personal archeology is a vivisection of an organic vacuum, an anatomy of a void. nothing, not-everything, constitutes the volume and depth; amplifying the silence and a doubt of a decision-making, the artist molds the matter as a tribal act of self-empowerment and emancipation. fullness, not void, void, not fullness, orifices and cavities, I touch and try, says bock, the assistant of the void in a passage through places of hesitation and precarity. "the true poet is one who always abandons himself."

june cresco negotiates the void in her humanoid arrangements based upon the rhythmical elaboration of matter and form. doubling, repetition and symmetry are the artist's ways to critique both the autonomy and the alienation of systems, caught in an imposed dance macabre of a life cycle. hers is a laboratory of organic melancholia; dismembered bodies and dysfunctional parts, forms within forms, are set in a mirror of their own hopelessness and despair, balancing the absence and echoing infra-realists calls: "tenderness as an exercise in speed. respiration and heat. experience shot, structures that devour themselves, insane contradictions". cresco's is both a lament for failed structures but also a longing for a rejuvenation and cohesion.

flaka haliti reduces the forms, removing information and erasing the content in a playful hide-and-seek combat, while simultaneously fabricating voids, making them visible and palpable. the artist is a mistress of porous structures; her hyper-flat, translucent surfaces - like membranes of the viscera - question solidity and substance; oscillating between emptiness and volume; haliti's is a bold gesture

of framing the void as a possibility for an escape into an illusion of poetry and dream. a guardian of the void, she maps the potentiality of the ephemeral and the frail in a toxic world of a visceral dominance. “we dreamed of utopia and woke up screaming”.

reading not-reading, performing text not-text, a score; carola dertnig's corporeal search for a meaning in sophie podolski's *le pays où tout est permis* confronts a choreography of words with a logic of sense and gesture. between words, an image, a visual pause in a chain of thoughts, a semantic breath from one line to another. a sequence of mental voids, looped in an anarchy of a liberated alphabet, here everything is permitted. language circulates as the text - like a skin, not-yours, someone else's - embraces the translation process, fabric over a fabric over an incandescent membrane, a masquerade; thus a pattern appears, a linguistic hybrid, an “emerald microbe”; and yet again, “the true poet is one who always abandons himself”. with a movement of lips, slowing of an eyelid, visceral sensation: resisting improvisation and improvising, dertnig talks a multiple self of an unfinished poem, the authoress.

Adam Budak