

*Plant Fear* suggests an altered world resulting from unprecedented local events that affect imperceptible change on an immense scale. These reverberations of change seep into the biosphere like an ongoing haunting following the initial incident. Drawing on the cultural influence of the 18th-century excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum on the European classical epoch, Kurz interprets volcanic fossils as occult artifacts, suspending in unique material constellations a record of transformation as well as the “spiritual, dematerialized information” of the ruined cities. The ghosts of antiquity remain present by way of the volcanic event. *Plant Fear* proposes a cyclical historical phenomenon linking the fallout of ancient natural disasters with a modern, synthetic correlative. Here, the artist engages his own childhood in Erbach, Germany and the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl Powerplant meltdown, which he has called a “manmade volcano.” How can the phantom forms of radiation and toxicity dispersed in high concentrations throughout Europe be accounted for? The half-life or gradual breakdown over time of chemical elements ciphers protracted after-effects of the cataclysm. Lasting impacts are evidenced through environmental decay and made manifest in pervasive cultural expressions of fear and chronic syndromes of mental disorder. The paintings and sculptures comprising *Plant Fear* address the world of invisible agents first through the visual regime of science and diagrammatic communication and arrive at the production of new landscapes mixing memory and mutation. The outgrowth of this landscape is the Dilldapp, part creature and part alter-ego of the artist, who holds the singular capability of navigating this terrain of contamination and resilient vitality.

Veit Laurent Kurz (b. Erbach, Germany, 1985) lives and works in Berlin and New York. He studied at the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Städelschule from 2009-2012 and the Academy of Art and Design, Offenbach from 2005-2009. An upcoming solo exhibitions, *The Dilldapp Memorial*, will be mounted in October, 2020 at Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milan. Other recent shows include *Nutrition and Drama* at Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin (2019), *Metaphors and Mutations*, Kunstverein Nürnberg (2019), Haus des Kleinen Brunnens (Trailer), *Éclair*, Berlin (2018), and *The Bavarian Vampire (A Site Visit)*, *The Store Front*, Luton (2018). His work was included in the group exhibition *Good Moves* at The Power Station, Dallas (2019), and his performances have taken place at Kunsthalle Zurich (2019), Real Fine Art, New York (2017), MoMA PS1, New York (2016), Whatpipeline, Detroit (2015), Portikus, Frankfurt and Bordeaux (2013), and Kunsthalle Bern (2013). Artist books and monographs include *Dream Baby Dream* (Haus Mödrath, 2020), *Lava Trilogie* (Kunstverein Nürnberg-Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, 2019), *RElife* (Hacienda Books, 2018), and *Kräutergasse* (Städtische Galerie Delmenhorst, 2017). In 2020, he was awarded The Matteo Olivero Prize and the Battaglia Foundry Sculpture Prize, which is accompanied by a new publication, *The Dilldapp Memorial* (Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milan).

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