

GALERIE EMANUEL LAYR  
SEILERSTÄTTE 2  
1010 VIENNA

T +43 1 945 1791  
GALLERY@EMANUELLAYR.COM  
WWW.EMANUELLAYR.COM

Niklas Lichti  
BioLifex

We usually see a lot of shoes, trouser legs, asphalt, trash, grass, leaves and roots. And inside your houses its socks, toes, table and chair legs, food scraps and crumbs that we eat off the ground. We see dust under cupboards and in corners, we know what's hiding under the sofa and our view out the window is of the sky. If we look at you we see deep into your nostrils where there is nothing of any interest to us. We are indifferent to your shame but sometimes we see stray hairs where you have missed a spot shaving. We follow your gaze and see what you look at, and what you overlook.

I saw a film recently, and shortly afterwards I went to the museum. I enjoyed the film a lot more the first time ù back then I left the cinema entranced. It felt like it had been projected right onto my retinas and was burned there forever. Outside it was spring and the streets were full of people, and I imagined the projection would be superimposed over all my experiences from here on. Each person or animal I encountered would be forced into the film's dramaturgy because my eyeballs were held hostage, and when I looked up at you, even your nostrils were suddenly interesting. I regretted not being able to hold a camera, although I wouldn't have been able to capture it anyway. All I could do was extend our walk, sniffing trees and street corners, making the occasional wrong turn and lingering at intersections. You didn't seem bothered as the weather was warm and you were in no hurry, but I feared that at home I would be left with only your feet to relate to, which in my current state would be excruciatingly dull. By the next day the film had detached itself from my retinas and was drifting into memory, where over the years it threatened to sink into oblivion.

Then the other day ù 8 years later in your life, 56 in mine ù as we sat in the cinema again watching the same film, my taste had clearly changed. By halfway through I found myself staring at the backs of your heads and scanning the ground for snacks. The remainder of the movie stretched out before me in infinite dog-hours. It was cold when we got outside and the salt-strewn pavements cut burning little wounds into my callused feet and both of us were keen to get home.

I rarely visit the museum and when I do I generally find everything hung far too high for me to be the target audience for the pictures. So I turn to the floor or the chairs set out for the custodians. To me, the institution expresses itself through its seating, and sometimes there are cookie crumbs to discreetly lick from the floor.

But that day at the museum I had the feeling that for the first time, we were really there together. There were no chairs or crumbs and the floor offered little so I sat beside you and observed you looking at a picture. I think we looked good together. At this moment I felt the need to tell you that animals keep pets too, I don't think you know this but ants herd aphids grazing on plants in order to milk their honeydew. The picture was of a horse rearing over the fallen Saint Paul. For you his frightened expression represented the shock of his encounter with God, for me it was his fear of being trampled by the horse. There was no need to argue about it but neither of us wanted to stay any longer so we headed home. On this day I tried everything in my power to avoid you having to pick up my excrement.