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Franz Amann is a state of the world

If Franz Amann's works were a community, and who would dispute that, then what kind of community would they be? And more importantly for us visitors, how would we participate? It would have to be a generous community, because it asks me to speak for these works, to do them justice - and to speak for even the smallest components, on behalf of the materials.

Franz Amann's manner of painting in works *No.1* to *No.5* serves up a feast, customised for the not-just-hallucinated body of his steadfastness. They must have sprouted up with great force and verve, these works. They must have sprouted up in the core of the painter himself - on all fours, hunched over, erect, at times bobbing slightly. To get material to speak, try it yourselves: it's about finding a balance between passively allowing it to happen, and acting with impulsive agility. Reclining on the couch sometimes, and waiting. This way the experiences of the coarse and the convoluted, but also the clear, the upcoming and the familiar can emerge, parallel and simultaneous. We speak of external and internal processes, referring to the pure material, which - in the attempt of writing about it - is expressed only through concepts, through terms: intimacy, exoticism, howling. Franz Amann teaches us that at certain times fearlessness is appropriate. In times like these, I tell myself.

And so I let a stubborn insistence in me rise to the occasion, and write about my amazement in the face of these far-reaching and contagious paintings: a negative form in metal sets off mental leaps, bewilderment and lighthearted innuendo. Is it the form itself? The idea, or the essence that one might call signature Amann. Is it character, nature or simply: the thing? I sense a calmness, a balanced centre and a kind of indifference, an apparent absence of a pulse, roar, or howl. Is it even expressed here, this idea, in a singular occurrence? I'm doubtful and I see: raw material. An idol? The metal piece is titled *No.0* (literally zero) and is thus included in the series of works *No.1* to *No.5*. Here too you can see the impact of vitality, heat, density, the rays and the earthiness of Amannesque painting. Distortion, overmodulation, at times short circuiting - as though we are all sitting together on a ferry on the Bosphorous, staring at the ceiling and gazing into the eye of the world, and seeing a borrowed world in borrowed time in our borrowed body that's trembling like a prowling animal. And what falls away, faded, is the word: *Human. Insan. Borrowed.*

I suppress my fantasies, the terror of mysterious desires, someone said that in such cases of suppression, words remain - words as symptoms. Gustave Flaubert wrote a letter to fear, the symptom: *To think (Ô) that I may never see the glowing eyes of a tiger crouching among the bamboo.*

Thomas Mann takes on this idea or fantasy in order to hallucinate up his hero Aschenbach - uses it to break through and follow his desires and find his *Death in Venice*. Howl is the title Franz Amann has given this current exhibition, and in this case the name is a sound. If Amann's art is archaic, it reveals that origin is to be found in the present, more than the past (relax: tomorrow doesn't even know you exist.) The space between the individuals making up a community needs to be filled in such a way that the efforts to manage all our exuberant fantasies do not result in violence. Let us remain unprejudiced but not unaffected. I see animal faces, I see claws, I see shellfish taking off their armor to mate. I hear idols. How can one get their hands free - on all fours? Enough. I see Sonni Blechdach on a blue carpet, he'll show you. I retreat into the glorious wilderness of our muddy reality. Do I hear someone mumble? Pathological? Thank you Franz!

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From here I leave it to you to join this self-expressive community. For the anecdote about traversing bog and undergrowth on a starless night so dark you can't see your own hand before your face to make the appointment ask the artist to tell you himself. Count faces! Consider yourself social! In one of Franz's wonderful *Selfies*. In this case allow yourselves a loud roar ù the last howler. It encouraged me so, even to write this in my own name.

Misha Stroj