

Galerie Buchholz

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Mathias Poledna

Indifference

6 - 29 February 2020

Opening on Thursday, 6 February, 6-8 pm

Galerie Buchholz is pleased to announce our sixth solo exhibition of the artist Mathias Poledna, his second exhibition in our New York gallery. *Indifference* brings together an installation of Poledna's recent 35mm film of the same title with two new groups of works on paper.

Poledna's film work *Indifference* (2018), presented here for the first time in the United States, further advances the artist's ongoing inquiry into modernity's visual imaginary. The film unfolds as a series of brief, hallucinatory scenes set in the waning days of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy at the cusp of World War I. It details in elegant restraint the seemingly mundane routine of a single protagonist played by French actor Alain-Fabien Delon. His character – an Austrian officer / aristocrat – is drawn from types common in German-speaking fin-de-siècle literature, as well as from historical dramas and period films produced in the Cold War era. While evocative of the larger backdrop of traumatic modernization and conflict in early 20th century European history, Poledna's film forgoes a broader narrative focusing instead on the transient and disjointed.

Intimating the aesthetics of surface, kitsch and the melodramatic, the work purposely fuses historical specificity with a sense of ambiguity. Shot on locations in Paris, France it employs particular sites – the Jardin du Luxembourg and its romantic Baroque *Fontaine Médicis* – as stand-ins for places in historic Habsburg Vienna. A common thread in Poledna's film work, *Indifference* draws from contiguous art practices such as painting and literature, as well as from popular culture, in particular explorations of history in genre and auteur film. The film's soundtrack is modelled on post-synchronization characteristic of co-productions in post-war European cinema excerpts from popular 19th-century music by Josef Strauss, Johann Strauss II and of symphonic works by Gustav Mahler recorded by Pierre Boulez.

For the exhibition, the presentation of *Indifference* is set against two seemingly unconnected groups of works on paper: a suite of pencil drawings featuring a grid-like composition in an open-ended number of permutations; and a group of collages of printed pages from a vintage operation manual by German printing press manufacturer Heidelberg mounted on sheets on animation paper. Both groups inconclusively evoke tenets of 20th century modern art. Acutely dissimilar from the film conceptually and formally, their joint arrangement in the exhibition suggests a contextual horizon in which works are continuously framed and re-framed through each other's presence.

Indifference premiered at the Liverpool Biennial 2018. A catalogue on *Indifference* will be published by MUMOK, Vienna this year. In Spring 2020, Poledna's work will be a part of the Made in L.A. Biennial at the Hammer

Museum and Huntington Gardens, Los Angeles. Recent exhibitions include the Renaissance Society, Chicago (2015), the Austrian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); Secession, Vienna (2013); and Mathias Poledna/Florian Pumhösl at Raven Row, London (2011). Group exhibitions include Liverpool Biennial 2018; “Dreamlands” at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016); the Sydney Biennale, Sydney, Australia (2014); “Modernologies” at MACBA Barcelona (2009-2010), and the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art (2006).