

Bob van der Wal
Belief System of a Cannibal Soul
25 October - 20 December 2018

Press Text

Neue Alte Brucke is pleased to present *Belief System of a Cannibal Soul* by Bob van der Wal.

The exhibition displays four works pointing to an analysis-cum-clinic of the artificial split between study and play, sociality and con, soul and system while producing a viewer that is both analyst-voyeur and co-performer.

In the gallery's front room, the visitor meets *Study Notes*. First formalized in 2016, the ongoing work consists of the artist's journals in ink on paper. Traditionally a reserved preliminary practice, the study notes found here surround the viewer with a dense collection of unsolved reflections that shift between the personal and common. The selection of study notes is a record on existential diagrams, subject formation, Catholic church sexual abuse statistics, climate change proofs, drawings of pornographic imagery, hormonal chemistry risks, A HIGHER POWER, diagrams of film narrative structures, economies of value accumulation. Specific motifs, words, and symbols repeat: a son on a father's back, RAW MATERIAL, hero's journey eternal return hero's journey eternal return, Simba, perfect network, PURE EVIL, PREACH. *Study Notes* is a display of an extensive journal in the genre of "artist study," far reaching to the point of self-evident exploitative investment.

At this front room's center, the visitor finds an opening to *CLNU4*. The abstract structure suggests a booth, or Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility, designed for one. The sterile white exterior walls contrast the softer, worn off-white interior, a darkened space with an inwardly curved entry. The gallery's front and back rooms are connected by three sculptures positioned in race formation, at knee height. Modernist-style plinths, covered in the same material lining the walls of *CLNU4*, display leather seats. Signs of wear are visible where bodies met with most friction. Attached garden snails leave trails of slime over their hourglass forms.

The back room presents a sparse staged setting. A metal CLOCK sticks out from an aluminum table top, which is supported by seven thin, vein-like legs. A painting of a village, framed game rules, and bullet holes make up the scene. In the month leading up to the exhibition's opening, the gallery's backroom served the artist's colleagues and friends as the backdrop for a weekly event held in the evening, playing Dmitry Davidoff's 1986 *Mafia*. The rules of the party game supply the subtitle DAY & NIGHT UNINFORMED MAJORITY VS INFORMED MINORITY. *Mafia* offers a possible parable for *Belief System of a Cannibal Soul*, as, within the safety of simulated conditions, the player is forced to traverse the conventions of moral boundaries into a territory where deception and indictment are the key survival tools.