



Jannis Marwitz
The Raid

April 30 – June 12, 2021

Jannis Marwitz
Angelus, 2021
Oil on wood panel
27 x 15 cm | 10 2/3 x 6 in





Jannis Marwitz
Three Geese, 2021
Oil on linen
170 x 110 cm | 67 x 43 1/3 in









Jannis Marwitz
Displays, 2021
Oil on oxidized copper
40 x 30 cm | 15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in



View of the artist's studio, Brussels, 2021



The distinctive and perplexing visual landscape crafted by Jannis Marwitz performs a contemporary Comedia dell'arte — where characters and settings bend and shift to equally shifting narratives. Dotted with citations from antiquity to the renaissance and beyond, Jannis Marwitz's overwhelming visuality corresponds to a world that, paradoxically, becomes harder to grasp through the overabundance of images we encounter daily.

Jannis Marwitz
Selbstportrait als Bauchredner, 2021
Oil on linen
80 x 45 cm | 31 1/2 x 17 3/4 in









Jannis Marwitz - *The Raid*
Installation view, Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin



Jannis Marwitz
A Soup – A Shelf – A Compost, 2021
Oil on wood panel
22.5 x 15 cm | 8 3/4 x 6 in







Marwitz's figures are malleable, his backdrops are undulating, and the moments he depicts seem to flicker and reconstitute themselves in an ever changing flow. This openness prompts double takes and invites a continual reshuffling of understanding.

Jannis Marwitz
The Architect, 2021
Oil on linen
45 x 30 cm | 17 3/4 x 11 3/4 in





Jannis Marwitz - *The Raid*
Installation view, Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin





Jannis Marwitz
The Raid, 2021
Oil on linen
80 x 115 cm | 31 1/2 x 45 1/4 in





Marwitz ventures to engage the draining of sense from our visual surroundings, where everything feels meme-able and conceptions of meaning or truth are increasingly subjective. His works draw upon the tension between art's often idealized past and our contemporary moment, luring the viewer into a mesmerizing house of mirrors.





Jannis Marwitz
3G, 2021
Oil on wood panel
43.5 x 28.2 cm | 17 x 11 in





Jannis Marwitz
Untitled, 2021
Oil on oxidized copper
15 x 10 cm | 6 x 4 in

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In Jannis Marwitz's *Angelus*, a figure hovers above a choppy sea, its windswept robes tantalizingly close to the open mouth of an inquisitive sea serpent. Sharing its name, which is Latin for "angel", with a catholic devotion, it's perhaps fitting that elements of this work should repeat throughout the artist's recent works. The levitating figure, seemingly pulled from a renaissance painting, appears again in *The Architect*, for instance, this time kept afloat by plumes of smoke that waft up from one corner of the painting. Grasping the same wooden baton in one hand and a ceramic pot in place of a drinking jug in the other, the second apparition of *Angelus* differs in multiple minor details to the first, suggesting that for every finished version of a painting there are countless other ways that the story could have been told.

In this new series, the concept of a raid – which suggests some kind of violent *outside* force breaching an *inside* realm – is as much a formal element as a narrative one, allowing for the introduction of tension between interior and exterior space within the canvas. This is most evident in the exhibition's titular work, which depicts one character in a green robe reclining on top of a table, while another, dressed in blue, flees an unseen attack by running underneath the too-tall piece of furniture. In exaggerating the table's dimensions, Marwitz opens up a domestic space within the landscape, which itself is restricted by the four "walls" of the canvas.

How does the narrative change when the perspective does? In these works, the same white and grey brushstrokes come to represent darkened clouds, the smoke of a burning building or steam rising from a boiling pot depending on where one looks. There are links between the works, yes, but they are formed not by a single narrative, but through a mesh of relations, which we draw by remembering an image from one painting that takes a slightly different form in another. With this technique, the melodrama invoked in a painting like *Three Geese*, is deliberately compromised by existing alongside *A Soup – a Shelf – A Compost*, which suggests that the threatening smoke in the aforementioned work may have been caused by the distinctly ordinary act of preparing dinner.

With this in mind, the smoke and clouds which pervade these paintings become not just theatrical in what they suggest, but also in how they create the illusion of depth by overlapping images like stage scenery in classical theatre. Characters, too, are almost always running in or out of frame – or if you like – on and off the stage. This is certainly the case with *Three Geese* and *3G*, paintings in which the role memory plays in this series is made even more explicit. Both works depict the same motif – a gaggle of geese and a group of women fleeing from an unseen commotion – with vastly different scales and a slight shift in colour. Compelled to stand closer or further away from each painting to get the perfect "resolution," there are alternating levels of intimacy at play when viewing each work, adding to the feeling of confusion at having been presented with the same image twice.

For the artist, these misunderstandings are a fruitful source of action. With *Selbstportrait als Bauchredner* (Self-portrait as a ventriloquist), for example, it's not clear exactly where the self-portrait resides. Does Marwitz see himself in the weathered face of the depicted captive, or should we look for his likeness in the eyes and nose painted, rather bizarrely, onto this man's stomach? In yet another repeated image in the show, this face appears again attached to the body of the titular character in *The Architect*, as well as on the same figure shown from a different angle in *A Soup – a Shelf – A Compost*. Adorned with a set of wire glasses, it seems to resemble the artist, but these items also seem to be asking: what is the self and what is a portrait of it? With their anguished, mask-like faces, the secondary characters who populate these paintings also can't be seen as portraits in the traditional sense, but suggest the almost bird-like disguises used by actors in *commedia dell'arte*, which give the audience clues into what kind of role they are going to play in the paintings' consistently changing narratives.

Chloe Stead is a writer, critic and editor based in Berlin

Jannis Marwitz (b. 1985, Nürnberg)
Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

Solo Exhibitions

2021	<i>The Raid</i> , Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin <i>ROD</i> , Kantine, Brussels (with Raphaëla Vogel)	2016	<i>Augury</i> , BQ, Berlin <i>Aby Warburg. Mnemosyne Bildatlas</i> , ZKM: Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe <i>Grand Café</i> , Apes & Castles, Brussels <i>microcelebrities2</i> , justmarried.one, Brussels
2020	<i>Kündigung</i> , Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf	2015	<i>Baby Birds</i> , Dorothea Schlueter, Hamburg
2019	Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund Sundy, London	2013	<i>Plus Jamais Seul</i> , Standards, Rennes <i>Collision Course</i> , Sodom & Gomorrah, Amsterdam <i>Exclusively für Alle</i> , Prince of Wales, München De Ateliers, Amsterdam <i>Say my Name, Say my Name</i> , MMK: Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt <i>Erection Painting</i> , Beyoncé, Amsterdam <i>Influence</i> , 1m3, Lausanne <i>Mild Mania</i> , 68 m2, Copenhagen <i>Cold Candy Crush Saga</i> , Hinterconti, Hamburg
2018	<i>Bonaventura Jannis Marwitzle</i> , Damien & The Love Guru, Brussels	2012	Kunstraum München, Munich <i>Afraid to be Good</i> , Lost Projects, Quezon City, Philippines <i>Schlagstock durch Aura kaufen</i> , Kunstammer, Schlieren, Switzerland
2017	<i>Like unhappy fruit</i> , Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf D.E.L.F., Vienna	2011	<i>Skeletons of Beer</i> , Pablo Gallery, Manila <i>Moment gewonnen</i> , Ventilazione, Vienna <i>Berlin Klondyke 2011</i> , The Odd Gallery, Dawson, Canada
2016	<i>The year is over now</i> , Marwan, Amsterdam		
2015	<i>Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben</i> , twenty years, Berlin		
2014	<i>Forehead</i> , Burg Bentheim, Bad Bentheim		
Selected Group Exhibitions			
2019	<i>Guten Morgen, Europa!</i> , A Tale Of A Tub, Rotterdam <i>Where Do Streams Run To?</i> , CFAlive, Milan <i>The Chasm</i> , Franz-Josefs Kai 3/17, Vienna		
2018	<i>Don Quixote</i> , Barbara Weiss, Berlin <i>Metamorphoseon</i> , Sultana, Paris <i>FOAF</i> , ChertLüdde, Berlin <i>SM</i> , Sans Titre 2016, Marseille		
2017	<i>B-Sides and Rarities</i> , Damien & The Love Guru, Brussels		

Bibliography

2020	<u>Art Review, „Jannis Marwitz at Dortmunder Kunstverein“, Moritz Scheper</u>
2019	<u>Mousse, „Myth Kissed and Foam-Born“, Moritz Scheper</u> <u>Artline, Portait by Dietrich Roeschmann</u>
2018	<u>Frieze, „Slanted and Enchanted“, Oriane Durand</u> <u>Frieze, Review by Mitch Speed</u> <u>Frieze, Critic's Guide: Amsterdam by Gabriela Acha</u>

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