

Sweetwater, Berlin

Cecilia

Anna-Sophie Berger, Benjamin Hirte, Sofia Leiby,
Morgaine Schäfer, Constantin Thun, Jeff Zilm
March 9, 2019 – April 20, 2019

In the streets of Cecilia, an illustrious city, I met once a goatherd, driving a tinkling flock along the walls. “Man blessed by heaven,” he asked me, stopping, “can you tell me the name of the city in which we are?”

“May the gods accompany you!” I cried. “How can you fail to recognize the illustrious city of Cecilia?”

“Bear with me,” that man answered. “I am a wandering herdsman. Sometimes my goats and I have to pass through cities; but we are unable to distinguish them. Ask me the names of the grazing lands: I know them all, the Meadow between the Cliffs, the Green Slope, the Shadowed Grass. Cities have no name for me; they are places without leaves, separating one pasture from another, and where the goats are frightened at the street corners and scatter. The dog and I run to keep the flock together.”

“I am the opposite of you,” I said. “I recognize only cities and cannot distinguish what is outside them. In uninhabited places each stone and each clump of grass mingles, in my eyes, with every other stone and clump.”

Many years have gone by since then; I have known many more cities and I have crossed continents. One day I was walking among rows of identical houses; I was lost. I asked a passerby: “May the immortals protect you, can you tell me where we are?”

“In Cecilia, worse luck!” he answered. “We have been wandering through its streets, my goats and I, for an age, and we cannot find our way out...”

I recognized him, despite his long white beard; it was the same herdsman of long before. He was followed by a few, mangy goats, which did not even stink, they were so reduced to skin-and-bones. They cropped wastepaper in the rubbish bins.

“That cannot be!” I shouted. “I, too, entered a city, I cannot remember when and since then I have gone on, deeper and deeper into its streets. But how have I managed to arrive where you say, when I was in another city, far far away from Cecilia, and I have not yet left it?”

“The places have mingled,” the goatherd said. “Cecilia is everywhere. Here, once upon a time, there must have been the Meadow of the Low Sage. My goats recognize the grass on the traffic island.”

“Continuous Cities 4”
Invisible Cities
Italo Calvino
1972

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Anna-Sophie Berger (*1989, Vienna) lives and works in New York and Vienna. Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include Cell Project Space, London (forthcoming, 2019); Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna (2018); JTT Gallery, New York (2018); Studio for Propositional Cinema, Düsseldorf (2017); MUMOK, Vienna (2016); and Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria (2016). Her work has been featured in group exhibitions at the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, Netherlands; Kunstverein München, Munich; Belvedere21, Vienna; and Kunsthalle Vienna, among others. She recently received the 2018 ars viva Prize and was a 2016 recipient of MUMOK's Kapsch Prize. Berger received an MFA from the fashion department of the University of Applied Arts, Vienna.

Benjamin Hirte (*1980, Aschaffenburg, Germany) lives and works in Vienna. Recent and upcoming solo or two-person exhibitions include Sydney, Sydney (forthcoming, 2019); CONDO New York (Galerie Emanuel Layr, hosted by JTT Gallery), New York (2018); Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna (2017); Museo Canonica, Rome (2017); Christian Andersen, Copenhagen (2016); Kunstraum Weikendorf, Weikendorf, Austria (2016); MMK3, Museum für moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2015); and MAK, Vienna (2012). His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Leopold Museum, Vienna; Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria; 21er Haus, Vienna; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; and MAK Center, Los Angeles, among others. Hirte studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with Heimo Zobernig.

Sofia Leiby (*1989, St. Paul, United States) lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include Ὑλη[matter]HYLE, Athens (2018); PAGE (NYC), New York (2017); Kimmerich, Berlin (2016); Clifton Benevento, New York (2016); and Michael Jon Gallery, Miami (2015). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at American Medium, New York; 247365, New York; Joe Sheftel Gallery, New York; and Future Gallery, Berlin, among others. Leiby received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute Chicago and studied at the Städelschule, Frankfurt with Monika Baer and Amy Sillman.

Morgaine Schäfer (*1989, Wolfsburg, Germany) lives and works in Cologne. Recent solo exhibitions include Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (2018); Baustelle Schaustelle, Essen, Germany (2018); Galerie Fiebach Minninger, Cologne (2018); Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf (2017); Buchhandlung Walther König Düsseldorf (2015); and das junge Museum Bottrop, Bottrop, Germany (2013). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany; Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, Cologne; Kunstverein Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany; and Kunstmuseum Solingen, Solingen, Germany, among others. Schäfer studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf with Christopher Williams.

Constantin Thun (Milan) lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include Youth Club, London (2018) and Galeria Fonti, Naples, Italy (2017, ongoing). His work has been included in group exhibitions at Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland; Mavra, Paros, Greece; Point Centre for Contemporary Art, Nicosia, Cyprus; Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo; and Elaine, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland, among others.

Jeff Zilm (*1958, Iowa City, United States) lives and works in Berlin. Solo exhibitions include Various Small Fires, Los Angeles (2016); Simon Lee Gallery, London (2016); And Now, Dallas (2016); and The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn (2014). His work has been included in group exhibitions at PRETEEN GALLERY, Mexico City; Daniel Reich Gallery, New York; Brand New Gallery, Milan; Venus Over Manhattan, New York; Arndt, Singapore; Pat Hearn Gallery, New York; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston and The Jewish Museum, New York. He was a 2002 recipient of the Otis and Velma Dozier Grant, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas. Zilm received a BFA in Art History from the University of North Texas and an MFA from Southern Methodist University.