

UNHEIM

Mirjam Walter & Tomasz Skibicki

Kunstbunker – forum für zeitgenössische Kunst e.V. in Nuremberg, Germany

08.08. — 05.12.2021

UNHEIM is a double solo exhibition organized by Mirjam Walter and Tomasz Skibicki - the winners of last year's art-academy Nuremberg debutant-prize. The exhibition was developed by the artists especially for the space of the Kunstbunker eV.

One function of a bunker can be to protect the human being from the outer world. The inner shell is invisible from the outside, the space is only revealed once you are inside. It is a self sufficient space and completely isolated, there is no daylight and no sense of time.

UNHEIM is a fictional noun formed from the German adjective "unheimlich". "Uncanny" is the English translation of "unheimlich" and a more literal translation would be "unhomely". The word 'heimlich', which is the opposite of 'unheimlich', means familiar and agreeable, though by extension of this agreeableness there is also the implication of concealment and keeping that which is unpalatable out of sight.

In order to get a better understanding of UNHEIM it is worth looking into Sigmund Freud's essay 'The Uncanny', where he claims that the 'uncanny' (unheimlich) refers to the uneasy sense of the unfamiliar within the familiar, the unhomely within the home. We learn from Freud that when we have an uncanny experience, we feel like there are ghosts in our house.

Both artists left the city of Nuremberg after graduating from the Academy and their show at the Kunstbunker can be seen as homecoming.

Dealing broadly with domesticity, architecture, fiction and space, Skibicki's video-work *Śóuvęńir* is made of a series of fragments, edited footage and analogue visual effects, merged with messages Skibicki exchanged with artists Stachu Szumski in a narrative-like attempt to interpret vulgar signs and other materialized abandoned traces of Polish presence in the Netherlands.

Specifically a graffiti reading "każdy ma prawo do szczescia ale nie każdy ma szczescie do prawa" / "everybody has the right to be lucky but not everyone is lucky to have rights" becomes a pareidolic trace enacting The Hoarder-Gatherer machine's non-linear narrative's attempt of translating the unpolished traces left in the building in active constituents of its world-building narrative.

In *Śóuvęńir* such a narrative is based on the notion of origin: the artist's body familiarizes with the building through a network of graffiti, whose content and language project him back to an origin, transforming his presence in space in an encounter.

In Tomasz Skibicki's work the ghostly space of the domestic becomes a cultural and sociopolitical signifier allowing a direct and embodied access of the artist body to the theme.

Tomasz Skibicki produces installations, sculptures, and films based on what he likes to call "firsthand encounters with second-hand stories". The Hoarder-Gatherer' is a research practice he has developed, where he comes into personal contact with vulgar culture objects and vernacular signs. In such investigative moments, he produces immersive video works, where he considers technique as special effects. Technique also plays a central role in the sculptures he produces. An attempt to refine traditional crafts such as wood carving and assembling to produce works that are riddles in personal and arcane narratives.

Mirjam Walter's paintings perform poses that lack an outside. Gestures of expression and longing are combined to form a dissonant braiding, negotiating the contradictions of the present, filling the space between images with physical ambivalences.

Mirjam Walter (*1993) has studied at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Nuremberg from 2014 to 2019.

Tomasz Skibicki (*1991) has studied at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Nuremberg from 2010 to 2015 and completed a master's program at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam from 2017 to 2019. He is currently an artist in residence at the Rijksakademie.