

## Today I Wrote Nothing

October 26th - December 6th, 2019

Rumpelstiltskin presents an exhibition featuring a video by Lucia Nimcova and Sholto Dobie recorded in rural Ukraine shortly after the removal of Viktor Yanukovich in 2014 as well as a drawing by Alejandro Cesarco. The exhibition seeks to explore how narrative and time are used to cope with the deeply complex contradictions of the present.

I thought about eagles for a long time, and understood a lot: eagles fly on heights sublime, disturbing people not. I saw that eagles live on mountains hard to climb, and make friends with spirits of the skies. I thought about eagles for a long time, but confused them, I think, with flies. <sup>1</sup>

Gossip and rumor are some of the chief forms of aggression among the powerless. The servant gossips about the master. The underlings can, with anonymity, stir public opinion about the boss. Gossip never started anywhere. It cannot be attributed to anyone. Rumor is perhaps considered to be witchcraft because it can be invisible, venomously destructive and impossible to contain. Moreover, gossip and rumor are universal tools. While they are available to the powerless, they are also used by the most powerful. Rumor fuels the mischief of micro-salons while also being a practical technique of markets and governments: special interest groups, for instance, created a hoax that global warming was a hoax to delay support for green policies. Hoax and spin are the raw material of politics. <sup>2</sup>

As Russian military convoys continue the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Putin has chosen to rehabilitate the alliance between Hitler and Stalin that began World War II. Speaking before an audience of Russian historians at the Museum of Modern Russian History, Putin said: "The Soviet Union signed a non-aggression agreement with Germany. They say, 'Oh, how bad.' But what is so bad about it, if the Soviet Union did not want to fight? What is so bad?" <sup>3</sup>

While to many people memory is a linear progression of sequential events constituting the present reality, many others have argued that history and memories about history are in fact constructions shaping a collective reality. Memories can be penetrated, invaded, altered, and ordered in such a way as to match prescribed paradigms. They are not static, fixed, or linear, but rather processes which are constructive, malleable, and changeable. <sup>4</sup>

The star of meaninglessness shines. It alone is fathomless. A dead gentleman runs in and silently removes time. <sup>5</sup>

Exhibition title originally selected from "The Blue Notebook" by Matvei Yankelevich for *Today I Wrote Nothing*, Overlook Press, 2007.

1. Kharms, Daniil. "Untitled" in *Today I Wrote Nothing*. Edited and translated by Matvei Yankelevich, Overlook Press, 2007.

2. Easterling, Keller. "Rumor" in *Via:Dirt*. University of Pennsylvania, 2012.

3. Snyder, Timothy. "Putin's New Nostalgia". *The New York Review of Books*, 2014.

4. French, Aaron. "The Mandela Effect and New Memory" in *Correspondences* 6, no. 2, 2018.

5. Vvedensky, Alexander. "God May Be Around" in *An Invitation for Me to Think*. Translated by Eugene Ostashevsky and Matvei Yankelevich, *The New York Review of Books*, 2013.