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Morning Pages

Eric Bell & Kristoffer Frick, Dave McKenzie, Eric Sidner

FEBRUARY 22–MARCH 29, 2015

OPENING RECEPTION SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 6–8PM

Disjointed temporalities, failed utopian constructs, quasi-historical propaganda, and the promise and disappointment of futurity sketch an anxious stage for works by Eric Bell & Kristoffer Frick, Dave McKenzie, and Eric Sidner in *Morning Pages*. Still, the exercise of “morning pages,” a form of meditative writing done first thing, reckons the continuous possibility of daily renewal. Attempting to pause the mind’s incessant oscillations before grappling with the day, this pause, a presentness maybe, allows a weary projection of optimism that one can move forward.

The exhibition centers around a series of large collages by Eric Sidner, where graphic images and text are appropriated from the so-called Black Panther Coloring Book. The coloring book is widely believed to be a product of COINTELPRO, an FBI program operating from 1956 to 1971 tasked with discrediting domestic political organizations deemed “subversive.” Full of disturbing depictions of both Panthers and police, the coloring books were sent to households across the country, a purported representation of the values of the Black Panther Party. In their radical violence, these images were intended to undermine the Party in the minds of the broader public.

Originally, Sidner was interested in these images only as reflective documents to consider in the studio, simply to face them every day. But the dissonant flatness of the loaded graphics and the artist’s feelings of awkwardness in approaching the sensitive source material compelled him to give the images a swelling mass: to add photographic images of people found on the internet, crudely cropped and spliced body parts and pinkish faces that suture the black and white media of the blank coloring book page. Further digital alterations and drawings lend the images a grotesque volume. A series of related works, including an inflatable sculpture like a flower, inform his troubled relationship with the original material, perpetuating a voluptuous horror and free-floating anxiety across the works. Even in their finished form, Sidner’s coloring book images feel uncontrollable, reflecting the impossibility of handling their content.

Works by Dave McKenzie and the Berlin-based collaborative, Eric Bell & Kristoffer Frick, locate Sidner’s images in dialogue with other readymade documents, probing psychological unease and the uncomfortable pairing of fiction and constructed histories. Dave McKenzie’s large-scale photograph, *Futuro* and sculpture, *Yesterday’s Newspaper* both reframe products that have already been carefully edited for consumption. In *Futuro*, an absurdly branded blue bed pan, is pictured in its packaging, held by a pair of young female hands. The work’s title alludes hyperbolically to a sad or sick future. In McKenzie’s rendering, the artist’s hands frame and mirror the original image, inserting a real body into an absurd narrative. *Yesterday’s Newspaper* elegantly and economically presents the eponymous daily. First realized in 2007, the object is invariably current, animating a record of the very recent past within the frantic 24 hour news cycle, and fluctuating between historical certainty and the

disposable potential of fact.

Bell & Frick's video work, *Hunting in Heaven* combines sleek footage of camera-ready foodstuffs, captured in the simplified language of product advertising with an intricate and inscrutable series of staged recipes, based on Filippo Marinetti's *Futurist Cookbook* (first published 1932). The footage documents the preparation of three Futurist plates: slow-cooked hare in sparkling wine with cocoa powder, lemon, green sauce and "those silver hundreds and thousands which recall huntsmen's shot," an "equatorial sea of golden poached egg yolks" with orange segments and truffle, and finally, boiled calf's tongue with prawns, lobster, and "crowned with six cockscombs."

While the written recipes are more poetic and esoteric than they are prescriptive, their rendering on screen by a professional chef evokes the kind of highly choreographed aesthetic of molecular gastronomy or foodie culture. Suggesting a twisted cross-contamination of Futurist goals of speed, technology, and violence with the current commercial imagery, the video extends the artists' ongoing interest in the ideologies rooted in designed product.

Eric Bell & Kristoffer Frick are Berlin-based artists who have worked together since 2006. Their work has been presented at international institutions, including the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2012), Kunstverein München, München (2012), Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2010) and in solo exhibitions at Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender, Berlin and Croy Nielsen, Berlin. Both studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt.

Dave McKenzie lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Aspen Art Museum, ICA Boston, and REDCAT, LA. He currently has a solo exhibition at Wien Lukatsch, Berlin and is also represented by Suzanne Veilmetter, LA. McKenzie is a recipient of the 2014-2015 *Chuck Close Rome Prize*. His work has been included in major exhibitions, including: the 2014 Whitney Biennial, *The Ungovernables*, *New Museum Triennial* (2012), New York, *Blues for Smoke* (2013), MoCA LA (traveled to Whitney Museum and Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus), *Prospect.1* (2008), New Orleans, and *Freestyle* (2001), the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.

Eric Sidner is based in Berlin. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Circus, Berlin and Johan Berggren, Malmö as well as group exhibitions at Laura Bartlett, London (2015), Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt (2014), and Altman Siegel Gallery, San Francisco (2012). Forthcoming projects include a group show at Deborah Schamoni, Munich in April, a presentation at Frieze, New York and a concurrent solo exhibition with Johann Berggren in May. Sidner studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt.

The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11am-6pm, and by appointment. Please call 212.274.0761 or email gallery@laurelgitlen.com for additional information or images.