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Thomas Geiger

Dreams That Money Can Buy

November 11, 2022–January 21, 2023

Salvador Dalí once said: “One day we will have to admit that what we call reality is an even greater illusion than the world of dreams.” Although the artist was excluded from the Surrealist group very early in 1934 by André Breton, he is still considered its best-known international representative.

In his works *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, the artist Thomas Geiger refers to the film of the same name by Hans Richter from 1947, in which well-known artists of the Surrealist group playfully deal with the connection between reality and dreams. Thomas Geiger publishes his own dreams, which he has written down over the past years just after waking up. These dreams make clear how much art is anchored in his subconscious and at the same time pose the question of what art is in the first place. We, who learn about these dreams after the fact, have to realize that the various elements that appear there, such as the well-known artists, are only fictional. Geiger presents us with excerpts from his dreams in which fictional events take place that are ontologically isolated from us to such an extent that we can only conceive them as if they would resemble our reality. They can never be completely grasped by us in their being. My Daniel Spoerri is different from the one Geiger imagines. My Zurich is different, my Macedonia, my Cristiano Ronaldo, etc.

Dreams That Money Can Buy shows us that dreaming is above all remembering. And perhaps we should rather distrust our capability of memory. Only because we can remember, we assume the existence of a memory. Or better said: because we cannot always remember – therefore often also forget (and above all always know about this forgetting) – we put a mind with memory as the condition. This mind contains all that has happened to us, what we have become and the self-images we uphold. The self-images are created by the contradiction that something ephemeral manifests itself permanently. Something that obviously has no material character, and once was only a flash of mind or brief thought, transforms itself during the translation into memory into a substance that suddenly takes form. This form gets a body, and a temporality is attributed to it. The body is, so to speak, the condition of the form. And we cannot imagine the survival of a form without a body. This lack of imagination compels us, in the case of sensory perception, to translate loose form into physical matter. After all, our senses are bound to a physical existence.

As a so-called dream expert, Dalí should be right in his statement “that what we call reality is an even greater illusion than the world of dreams”, but our world has also moved into a post-factual age. Particularly in the field of politics, it is no longer important to convince with facts, but rather with emotional effects. This involves deliberately scattering uncertainties and propagating various forms of reality. But this model of realism is fragile and is used mostly manipulatively in order to assert self-serving or monetary interests. Therefore, it is very worthwhile to think more intensively about how

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our world would change if the subconscious suddenly had the same status as what we call consciousness. How would we talk to each other and discuss problems? What would happen to art? What meaning would it have? Would we be able to redefine acceptance for others? Would we – as a society – move closer together or further apart?

Thomas Geiger invites us to think about all these questions. By presenting his dreams, he offers us the opportunity to build our own world around them and thus create new dreams and realities. Maybe we can change or develop “reality” a bit with it, or at least our thinking about it.

– Julia Moebus-Puck, 2022

Credits:

Thomas Geiger
Dreams That Money Can Buy
Digital prints on paper
Edition: I + I AP
32.5 × 23 × 3 cm (framed)