

The Pompeii Paradigm

What remains from a particular time, from a particular decade, or even just from a few years in the heads of everyone who lives (and didn't die), when everyone is always and endlessly caught up in all of this *being alive*?

Most of it will just be forgotten.

Most of it isn't actually (for the remainder of your life) that important.

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The fact that, in summer 2005, there was an exhibition in an art centre in Nuremberg with the title *unburied/reburied* ... Does that matter?

Even brutal fractures, like in March 2004 when 191 people were killed in Madrid when the commuter trains were bombed, and countless others were injured ... Who even thinks about that anymore?

And the fact that on the 7th of May 2003, on a Wednesday evening, two people met in a little cinema in Fürth, kissing there for the second time, while – for the two of them alone, more or less – Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* was playing, the badly glued together copy of the film kept tearing and the projection kept – at the most impossible moments (just as those lips were touching) – being interrupted and the lights went on ... Who cares?

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No one at all – out of those living, in life – really has to care, but it does matter ... within the construction of a past, that reflects the perception of a particular (*felt*) present.

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Sometimes I feel as if the 2000s never happened. And then as if they never ended.

A particular art that was being made back then, a particular sensibility, a particular *elan* seems to have been extinguished from memory.

And perhaps for good reason.

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'And what if it wasn't all bad ... ?!'

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How does one reference a remembered past without *falling for* the usual clichés?

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Like a wish, the idea of a *History without a Message* haunts my mind. A historiography that illustrates nothing, that justifies nothing, that doesn't try to consolidate anything; that avoids hierarchies, rejects genealogies, refuses to instrumentalise knowledge. That, at best, sees no

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connection, no causes, no effects. Just incidents, things, people: unconnected, non-causal, *concrete*. In which everything is there latently and is allowed to emerge: the names, the places, the years. But only in parallel with each other (or within each other), without meaning, without intention. A historiography that is also about allowing everything to recur, to name, to show, to keep present. So that no one, ever again, can use the past, can position it. For whatever reason.

Dominik Sittig, August 2022

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