

ROLF NOWOTNY

COMP NUMB LIMB

24.06.23 -24.09.23

COMP NUMB LIMB is an exhibition by the Danish artist Rolf Nowotny. In the exhibition, we are taken through three scenarios – from the large, grey-painted brick reliefs of the first room, to the whitewashed corridor, and on to the last room, all in red and covered with battens and chicken netting.

The works in the exhibition are actors and props in a grotesque chamber play. The reliefs are painted in the color Eigengrau. It is the color you see with your eyes closed in a darkened room, and it is also called Eigenlicht (eye light) and Brain Gray. It is a shadow world that is portrayed here, the child's world and a state between waking and dreaming. The reliefs become the child's big eyes and we find ourselves in the middle of this dreamed architecture or of the very being of the child. The barrier between dream and reality, fantasy and reality lies like an invisible membrane across the exhibition, and in the middle of this stands a clown with four arms and four legs. It keeps a moving eye and a flickering gaze with these different states or interfaces.

The corridor between the two exhibition spaces is made clear as a transition – in *COMP NUMB LIMB* it is the transition from a dreamy state to a more nightmarish one. The red floor and the red walls in the room at the end might warn us of boundaries that should not be crossed.

Kitty Horrorshow, with whom Rolf Nowotny has worked in the past, has created the text "The Palmist" for the exhibition which reads, among other things, as follows: "He moves like a mirror, and he laughs without a mouth. I don't know why he's laughing, and I think if I knew I wouldn't like it, but the sound makes me happy ... I don't know if I can make my arms bend like his, and it's getting harder and harder to get out of bed each day. "

The child's dreamlike vision penetrates the walls of the house and exposes not only the bricks here, but also the world of the adults. *COMP NUMB LIMB* scratches the norms which are woven into family life, parenting, in society and culture and makes the familiar strange and porous. The darker sides of family life – inherited myths, disputes and sorrows, for example – and the difficulty of having to belong and be included in fixed communities are hidden, but feel present nevertheless. Like the gray color behind the eyelids, the exhibition finds itself in the borderland between light and dark, the familiar and the unknown.

Rolf Nowotny (b. 1978) lives and works in Copenhagen. He graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2009 and has since exhibited widely in Denmark and abroad, including at Arken in Ishøj, Kunsthal Aarhus, Museo Pietro Canonica in Rome and at Momentum – 9th Nordic Biennial for Contemporary Art in Moss, Norway. In 2014 he received the Niels Wessel Bagge Art Fund's Legacy and in 2021 the Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen's Legacy.

Kitty Horrorshow is the pseudonym of an independent video game developer that creates surreal and atmospheric 3D horror games.