

Gio Marconi Gallery is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition "Cafe Kaputt" of Berlin-based artist Lothar Hempel.

Three larger installations, three sculptures and three large diamond shaped photographic collages are on display in the gallery groundfloor space. They portray memories and emotions, facts and mythologies, thoughts, references and lives, that intertwine and coexist, fertile or sterile. In the middle of all this is where Hempel's images gather, like water in subterranean caves.

It's a chaos, a zero point from where nothing and everything is possible. Hempel says: "My disasters are mostly beautiful and deliberating catastrophes. They are transitions from one possibility to another and just mark a moment in between". If Modernism expunged context for the sake of content, Hempel does the opposite – cramming images so full of references and ideas that it is difficult to know where to start looking at them. Lothar Hempel treats the world like a giant ready-made on the move. He encourages art - as an object, an idea or an attitude – to dematerialise into different realms. He asks the viewer nothing less than to become both actor and spectator, therewith taking an active role in the interpretation and creation of meaning: a meaning that emerges in his work which is comparable to the way it emerges in a dream - as flashes of intuition, moments of clarity and through the fragments, connections, signs and sounds of our environment.

An excerpt from an interview between Emma Stern and Lothar Hempel sheds light on it: ES: "You once said somewhere that your work is about show business. What the hell do you mean with this?" LH: "Show business in it's various aspects is meant as a metaphor here. I enjoy to see the self as a role that one becomes by choice. This role is you and nothing else, but still there is a moment of estrangement here, a certain gap, something physical, even though entirely abstract. It's a wound that will never stop bleeding. An endless drama. When you say I, it is as if you enter a stage. It's too bright up there and you'll be blinded. It's too hot up there and you feel awkward and stiff, but you are a professional and so you pull through. Eventually you panic as you realise the presence of the crowd in front of you which you can't see, only hear, as it breathes. Like an animal, and yet mechanical. But you are a professional. You'll pull through. The stage is a machinery. The audience is part of this machinery like screws and pipes and doors and props and fire alarms and tickets and feathers and flowers and speakers and lamps. The audience is part of this machinery even when they are not sitting in their seats. The audience is part of this machinery before they even come to the theater. The audience is part of this machinery after they have left the theater. When they are in their cars and when they drive home, smoking, dreaming, slowly forgetting what they just have seen." ES: "Aha, well, and what is Cafe Kaputt?" LH: "Cafe Kaputt is the place where the actors go when the show is over."

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