

## GALERIE PEPE

**Galerie Pepe is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by New York-based artist Nate Boyce (b. 1982, Kansas City, MO).** November 16th, 2023 - January 20th, 2024

In the back of the gallery the animation *A Light That Dies In My Mouth* plays against a piece of scrim hanging from the ceiling. It's a hand-drawn re-animation of a video of George Balanchine's choreography for Anton Webern's *Concerto for Nine Instruments*—in which a duet of dancers move erratically, supposedly in synch with the twelve-tone composition—while rotoscoped cartoon figures emerge at varying speeds. On the neighboring room, processed images of Gottfried von Bismarck are overlaid with hand-drawn passages from the Austrian poet Georg Trakl. In the front of the gallery engravings dissolve into abstract notation on top of a series of aluminum sculptures that are contoured as though they've been set to music. They are sculptures of compositions that were poems written for a dance.

Anton Webern spent decades deconstructing music theory before encountering the problem of inspiration. With such a detached form of music, where do you begin? He based a series of compositions off the poems of Trakl, who had spent the final years of his life serving as a nurse for the Austro-Hungarian Empire during WWI, an experience that only confirmed the civilizational decline that Trakl had nearly fantasized about his entire life. Trakl's poetry translated this decline with decadence, which Webern then filtered through the discipline of his music—musicologists frequently say that you can see mountains in his scores. In 1914, Trakl died of a cocaine overdose, while Webern was killed by a nervous American soldier two weeks after the end of WWII.

Trakl's poetry is so emo that it's almost funny. His scenes are filled with orphans and death; *Decaying in a bush of thorns*. He was obsessed with humanity's incurable madness and the idea that it was a daemon that ran through people and history. Madness itself was a shared form. He saw it in poets such as Friedrich Hölderlin, who had an intense influence on Trakl's poetry, and had himself spent half of his life living in isolation in a tower due to insanity. But Hölderlin thought that our lives were too ridiculous to be purely tragic. In fact, he thought the comedic form was the most applicable to our experience. In 1803, three years before Hölderlin was interned in a sanitarium and subsequently adopted into the care of a carpenter in Tübingen, he published *Remarks on Oedipus* in which he viewed mythical characters through a decidedly comic, instead of tragic light. He wrote, "Thus, man forgets himself and God turns, but in a sacred way, like a traitor."

Patrick McGraw

Nate Boyce (b.1982) lives and works in New York City. Selected solo exhibitions include the Kunstverein München, Munich; the Yerba Buena Center for Contemporary Art, SF, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha; and IMO Projects, Copenhagen. Select group exhibitions include the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham; Vilma Gold, London; the Abrons Art Center, NY; On Stellar Rays, NY; the California Biennial at the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach and the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing. Regularly touring with his collaborator, Oneohtrix Point Never, Boyce has presented shows for the Museum of Modern Art, NY; MoMA PS1, NY; the SFMoMA, SF; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Barbican, London; Royal Festival Hall, London and the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh.