

Press release:

What happens when you scale down this most huggable of alpha predators: you get a teddy bear. Berlin's he raldry materialized in fiberglass and merrily painted, is intended to inspire tolerance and understanding, the formation of values, etc. An ongoing charity project since 2001, when it was founded by philanthropist Eva Herlitz, today there are some 2000 Buddy bears that have been dispatched throughout the world on a sort of ambassadorial mission. Stripping it of its coating and enlisting it to the honorable but cumbersome task of upholding transparency is to emphasize another role altogether, one they have played all along: as psychological slave, essentially exchangeable, in our infantile symbolic play, striving for Geborgenheit, shelter from life's intricacies.

Since the 1970s, after the GDR had already signed the Helsinki Accords, committing itself to safeguarding human rights, forced labor practices began to play an integral part in the nation's business plan. The economical exploitation of prison inmates, including political prisoners who had criticized the regime or attempted to flee the country, had been part of a scheme to profit from the compulsive consumerism of its neighboring class enemies. Instead of resorting to passive wonderment over their economic rise, the GDR entered into contracts linking some of its publicly owned enterprises (Volkseigene Betriebe) to the product chains of Western companies, notably those of a certain nordic furniture maker.

A visceral intimacy binds us to the domestic objects we surround ourselves with, perhaps blinding us to their symptomatic character, the story they tell, their content. And that's fine, else we stub our toes and pause to realize who we've become. Where did all these plants come from? Interiority is necessarily patchwork, a matter of one thing at a time, and I suppose we've become sufficiently transparent to ourselves by now to know better than to excavate all the things, all the time.