



Marxergasse 16
1030 Wien
fox-vienna.com
open on fridays 5 - 9 pm
or by appointment!

Helmut Heiss
SLIPSTREAM

February 27 – March 12 2024

Finish Fetish

The first time I met Helmut he was leaning against the bar at AFG in ocean blue bibs. Albert introduced us with a cat-like smile, grinning at the size of the universe inside of his head. It was a decade or so ago and it was fall or maybe winter in the 2nd district. Helmut had spent the day covering the interior of a building with white walls and I wasn't sure if he was a teenager or working to pay against a mortgage. We talked about skating, Italy, and dialect. He helped me glue drywall together at the seams for one show, then we started collaborating on another. He made a triple-armed turntable and taught me a lesson about looking that echoes into almost every project I've worked on since. A year or so later we went to Lithuania with Albert and started small fires, played around in a former KGB's front yard and watched the sun set from opposite sides of the earth.

A couple of nights ago we talked about racing on acid. He tells me there's a specific pocket you can hear with the right team surrounding you. That weather becomes lost with just the right dose, and the slipstream is where you can rest in the noise. He explains speed in psychedelic terms and I nod. I think teams are for believers, terms are made of lies, and individuals made from corners. I think Helmut wants to bend the world but doesn't have enough logs to heat it.

This afternoon I had a really nice dream about being in the mountains. I was standing with some artist friends and looking at a half pipe covered in snow and gym padding. We discussed whether it was a spine until I woke up to arguing. I had another dream about being a security guard for Conan O'Brien. It paid twenty-five an hour and we mostly spent time talking about his camera collection. I quit the job just in time to wake up for work.

As a transition I wanted to insert the show title here with some clever description of conceptually tagged fetishes, maybe a line or two about sleeping next to my shoes when I was a kid (both the Reebok pumps and the Jordans). A tidy sentence about melodic sculptures, my brother shitting into my skate shoes, belonging, and the myth of the 90s being categorized by a kind of ecstatic stability. I tried to work out some lines about consumer allegiance as millennial first order identity politics but failed.

Helmut steps to the side of a parking block. We talk about objects being eaten by their surroundings, how slivers of color make brands, how surprisingly slim the margin between getting bent and bending is. He tells me that if his works need titles they've failed to speak for themselves and describes how denim is stitched until it becomes a curtain. I think about prestressed jeans and how watching him walk a bike can teach me about the physics of drag. I try to tune into the calm but unsettled rustling of his melodies. I ask him to build a bed for my kid but instead he finds out that our apartment is missing a wall. I like watching him stop to admire a spill, seal meaning into objects, wait for bubbles to pop. I like the way he ignores himself and folds his hands. I like watching him look for objects without names. I like making lists of things I'll never do. We talk about the weather when we want to forget about site. I ask him if he wants to make a showroom for perverts. When we're too cold to say goodbye, I open the door and think about taste.

Seth Weiner, 2024