

Cloud of the Day

This exhibition is about clouds and about the layering of cloud technique. It's not about the inner monster that lives in the studio and needs to be fed and kept entertained—at least, not all about that. This time it's an evaporation, clouds that can drift past the monster, or it's about the general possibility to smoothly drift by or let something drift away from reality into a dream world or a dream within reality. Just like the dream director, in between the interior and exterior metaphysical space, edits the dreams the cloud director sends a "cloud of the day", assigned to be painted by Evan and Josef, to be zoomed in and out on for the in-house production. Clouds can be viewed from the window, by the monster and by anyone else who happens to be looking outside or upwards at the same time. During the day, the clouds do not look inside; they reflect on the surfaces of buildings and glass facades, and the fact that a monster might be watching makes no difference to them. Clouds pass by like letters without a sender, without a receiver, without a message and arrive at my studio. They have already transformed their shape and color when, and if, they arrive in Laketown. Not all of them do. Their spongy-language can absorb things, which can, in turn, also be extracted from them; they obscure the landscape editing practices at the heart of the capriccio painting technique in paintings by Bernardo Bellotto, the nephew of the real and older Canaletto, but also he called himself Canaletto; and in real life they stretch out across the horizon and tint the sunset in Laketown. Their shapes and colors depend on their aggregate state, on their density, on how many are pressed against each other. And then they come into contact with reality—melted tin alchemy. Your studio is on the Ringstrasse, the city center studio, and my studio is completely on the steppe, the most outer edge of Vienna. In between is a huge zone with housing developments where excavated mountains of earth pile up next to fallow land because earth has to go somewhere after being dug up – just like with the artificially constructed lake in Laketown. Following the serpent "U2" metro line leads out of the urban density of the Ringstrassen Area into the steppe. It was once a steppe, then an airfield, and is now a grid-planned city. I'm writing this text "U2-immanently," so to speak. The cloud language is writing this on the way from Ringstrasse to Laketown, and I am reading it and typing it here while traveling on the U2.

This has never happened before. Normally, Josef writes everything in his exhibitions himself. This is an experiment, it's the first time that someone else has occupied or taken over this interior courtyard or the wish came up that I should be part of this text and stepping in, or rather, trying to find my way between the text and the exhibition sponsor object. I took the word "itim" from him and it has many synonyms: article, thing, object, piece, unit, component, matter, point, issue, case, question, concern, detail, subject, feature, particular, affair, aspect, entry, theme, consideration, topic. It's not entirely clear what it is; it can be loaded with meaning, misinterpreted, and above all, it can be moved to different places in the text.

A new rainy morning, then dozed off it was bright and I woke up and it was bright, like the rain and, above all, the clouds on a tree and almost completely forgotten the dreams this time they were vivid otherwise nothing left (of them) but they were like they always are I thought while still dreaming they weren't too intense, up, til now for a new morning for rain for clouds for green leaves right outside the window for wet dark grey morning clouds, the contentment of paltering time away from those cooped up in matters outside of time, themes that act like they were from a time from the present time, the present is the point at which time is completely here but isn't noticed, hypostasis, and the themes of the present are far away and then a path appears today pointing out of the never ending reading recess now and at least now this is the case since I wrote all this down and it's meaningless

Josef's Rilke Dream

What's that with Rilke? It's not Rilke, it's this exemplary tradition in Rilke. This exemplary tradition this Prague in Rilke. This element of perhaps even metaphysical tradition that he always wanted to get rid of but as the Ringstrassen studio monster he could never shed, that he always kept looking for modern thinkers and modern artists and contemporary art those not burdened by this dark metaphysical tradition, those not burdened by this tradition's gloom constructed entirely inside themselves, and made friends with them, in order to finally get rid of this tradition, this tradition that followed Rilke into his innermost world and thought is called: „PRAGUE!“ but for me it was always called Vienna, or Rilke. Maybe it didn't matter, maybe it was pointless but if he hadn't always had to rid himself of Prague, it never let go of him, there might have been absolutely nothing there, no texts and nothing left at all.

Katharina wanted to clear this up and wanted conjure up this Prague for Rilke „too late“ or at the very least to understand it and to draw a diagram for everyone else and to free it from this unknown within, that is, bring it back into the present. But I don't think I can, or it's just not possible. And now you're driving through Prague.

I woke up with that in the middle of the night. I would never send you written stuff like that. But waking up with this dream and with your situation, that you're going to drive through Prague today, because of this coincidence I do think I should send it to you; and the last few days have been really agonizing, I am trying however I can to find the point of the exhibition, the resolution, you might say, but now I realize I just can't, I just can't make it happen. At this point I'm pretty exhausted from it all and still one more week in this magnum opus, this alchemical magnum opus of mine.

It was actually just a coincidence that I came across the burning and melting of the pewter mugs, the tin sculptures and idols, but now because of my plan to rehabilitate Rilke I read his biography and read that Rilke tried to overcome his Prague heritage but never really could, but that he thought that his childhood in Prague was full of these pewter mug everywhere, this would-be ostentatious arty idolatry, and so as a call to action and destruction of this horrible phantasm childhood tradition I wanted to do all of this for the exhibition so that the pewter mug don't only symbolically dissolve but also for Rilke himself even if he isn't alive any more is long dead and then for me and my inner resolution since I'm not dead yet.

And even though probably for Rilke and for me this pompous magical ailment or the escape or struggle against it actually produced this art that we made, I wanted to get rid of it all fantastically as a new goal, but I think it's too much, I can't get to the point so to speak, or, I can't bring it to light. That's why I at least want to bring this to light because of waking up in the night because of waking up in the night, because of the dream and because of the coincidence that you just happen to be driving through Prague today. In my dream you and me, we went into a massive old building, it was an old, dark temple or church, as we went in I saw an old friend of mine in the dark old temple and I went to him. And we greeted one another and I noticed that you had gone off somewhere else in the temple behind me, just went somewhere off else while I had moved forward to greet him. Sometimes I seem to run into this old friend of mine a lot when I find myself entering such odd buildings.

Like a companion and someone who explains, always there. And I said a few words, said we just came from Semmering. Then I noticed that I could see you out of the corner of my eye and that you quickly disappeared behind a wall and, as if everything was completely normal, you went up a small staircase and up in the temple arch way up there I saw a huge throne, and I saw you suddenly sit down upright on the throne. I didn't know what I should do or think and quickly looked back to my dream companion and he told me that it's totally normal and wondered, didn't I know that you were the daughter of the highest ranking priest, the head priest of this huge temple.

Right then I woke up and tried to write everything down as quickly as possible. That, even if it's all pretty chaotic this huge project, at least I was able to write it all down, bring this to light.

Butterfly Redemption

My job at the time was at the royal butterfly house, a house with a tropical microclimate where I gave tours and organized weddings.

It was the most far out job one could imagine because it was intimately connected to the butterflies' life and death. The butterflies were my co-workers, exhibition objects and animals. I guess this is what defines the exhibition space of a zoo, with the exception that Butterflies have a particularly short life span. My job existed because they needed to be restocked weekly. When everything was heading towards their transformation, the caterpillars developed their cocoons and were then shipped to Vienna.

I hung them in a secured glass house display for hatching. 97% of the caterpillar material gets transformed into the butterfly, the other 3% is used as energy for the transformation process. The transformation from caterpillar to butterfly only leaves this 3% energy as waste. After the transformation process the cocoon is completely empty. There is nothing left. How much waste material is used in the Rilke redemption? The tin vessels were collected from online and physical flea markets and were melted afterwards into magnets with 0% waste. Josef accidentally even found during the idol purchases a real Rolex for 40 Euros. This kind of random transformation plus added value also occurred.

This text, entitled Bentley, was written when I was still working in the butterfly garden. Before butterflies take their first flight, they look wrinkled and exhausted. It takes thirty minutes to an hour for the wings to flatten out and for the butterfly to become something like an image – a flat surface with reflective parts here and there.

That's its survival strategy.

People don't eat butterflies. They read the pictorial qualities of butterflies as metaphors for beauty and mystery: the butterfly rests on a beautiful flower. A friend of mine sent me this video clip. It shows a butterfly resting on a grey square stone. A black pug sits behind the stone. Its flat face is parallel to the camera. The voice of the observer explains: a butterfly Bentley. Bentley's wet tongue reaches the dusty butterfly's wings. The pug looks sharply at the camera and then runs out of sight. The video is shot from the perspective of the dog's owner, who is witnessing this scene through the lens of her mobile phone: she looks at her dog, Bentley, and we all look at the pale blue butterfly. At the moment of his encounter with the butterfly's body, Bentley looks directly into the camera. I imagine the butterfly's wings probably melt like butter on a dog's tongue. They dissolve into millions of particles of color.

Continuous twilight on the Rilke project it is in a sleeping state and is apparently trying to wake up, I have to ask what this even is, the brain of a cat as a metaphor. The discovery of a double brain in cats, a reaction to so-called domestication after so many generations, instead of producing some kind of adaptation like with dogs, a double brain, one brain adapted in the wild and one adapted through domestic life, dreaming

It's a Capriccio

Just like the dream director, in between the interior and exterior metaphysical space, edits the dreams the cloud director sends a "cloud of the day", zoomed in and out by Evan and Josef and stretched into detail for the production of the indoor cloud paintings. But these are cloud capriccios. In the 18th century technique of capriccio painting, disparate architectural or landscape elements are collaged into a single composition. These old paintings often depicted fantastic scenes or reconstructed views of cities such as Venice or Rome. When Josef started the cloud project, he went to the Kunsthistorisches Museum for research and took a poster of Schönbrunn Palace by Bernardo Bellotto, simply called Canaletto. The Studio Canaletto technique involved taking several pinhole camera images from the same point of view, with different angles, and then assembling them into a single drawing on which the paintings would be based. The edges of these images were elongated to produce the impression of a panorama. Capriccio is not so much a specific genre. It's more an attitude or an approach, a kind of indulgence in the distortion of spatial and temporal factors. Italian painters combined various important sights into a 'best of' painting based on whim. There was a particular delight in depicting existing architecture as ruins, covering it with moss and showing crumbling stones. To paint something as already decayed or ruined can, I think, be seen as the highest compliment, emphasizing the importance of the subject and anticipating its very own ruinousness in the present. The magic magnetic splatters are made of melted tin mugs and tin sculptures and idols, which can be understood as ruins of a former entity of the interior Rilke that has changed its aggregate state. They are now placed on sometimes romantic, sometimes threatening, evil sky canvases that reach out with cloud claws. They are evidence of the redemption from the redemptive drive, which constantly seeks to console or redo the works and deeds of the past. The rule of the physical universe is that nothing can be lost and can only dissolve into another aggregate state or form.