

Gaga Present

JOSEF STRAU

“the „why does this all happen to me?“ experience

Opening: Thursday 9th of September 19 hrs.

Exhibition until 13th of November.

During the intense but somehow aimless exercises to explore the possibilities of an abstract language system, defined mostly by colored dots, I read an article mentioning the invention of the divine trinity.

The text was describing the legitimization of divine authority through the narrative of the transmission of higher voices. The interest in the creation of an abstract language came from my earlier attempts of “automatic writing“, which allowed for partly intended narratives and the appearance of „inner voices“. Far from having any theological implication, these profane writing attempts became the fundament for translations into abstract visual language. Secondly, it triggered an ongoing interest in dream science, lucid dreaming and in historic examples of inner and outer voices represented in religious or prophetic narratives and modern literature. Obviously this discursive agenda provoked serious attempts to practice all these kinds of experiences myself and give written or visual evidence of them. The exhibition at House of Gaga should represent this struggle in a fragmented and somewhat concealed way, which seems appropriate when dealing with strange appearances.

To work both on and with translations of all kinds of non-intentional or better self-denying forms of language, requires an attitude of service and sometimes-even obedience. But these attitudes can become a source of deep pleasure as well.

The ambivalent figure of the artist/writer in the role of a servant/transmitter echoes the complex structure of religious and sexual pleasures of this kind of devotion.

In the beginning I painted the canvas in a traditional modernist monochromatic way. I kept putting on layer after layer of whites and slightly differing grays and yellows. There is hardly a method of painting, which is more inhibited and oppressively conceptual than this. Sort of like using color, but simultaneously brushing it out of the image in order to create an almost non-chromatic effect. Whenever color comes into the process one has to make sure that any appearance of real color would be eliminated and turned into „professional grey“. However, if painting white on white, the white you paint over and over is not white anymore, it becomes dirty and dark, making a suitable background for application of real color and for the translation of cryptic narrative color field theories. The installation of time-dependent decaying objects of domestic life emphasizes the abstract-universal-crypto-poetic-chromatic quality of the paintings on the gallery wall as structures of almost immaterial appearance.

Josef Strau, Mexico City, September 2010

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