

Leo Reichling
Varicelle
20.04.25 - 30.05.25

"Varicelle" invites us to consider illness not only as a physical condition but as a passage—a strange and often unsettling encounter with the self. In this exhibition, Leo Reichling draws on experiences of vulnerability and transformation, linking them to sensations of being possessed, mirrored, or altered in one's desires and capabilities. The space is inhabited by dolls and imbued with an atmosphere of abandonment or malaise, evoking an ambiguous terrain between play and pathology.

The title, *Varicelle*—French for chickenpox—references a common childhood illness. Though typically mild, it carries with it a shared memory of feverish days, confinement, and bodily change. Reichling uses this cultural memory as a point of departure to explore larger ideas: the notion of the Double, the presence of the Other, and the strange interplay between separate forms or identities that remain close, yet resist full fusion.

Reichling's artistic practice embraces a kind of fevered or "sick" vision—not in a medical sense, but as a methodology that challenges clarity and coherence. His work remains committed to the long-standing ideals of art-making, while deliberately passing through phases of disorientation, restlessness, and unstable perspectives. In this world, the mirror—normally a tool for self-recognition—turns dark. It becomes a black scrying glass, revealing not a clear self, but doppelgängers, changelings, and alternate versions of subjectivity.

The exhibition unfolds across three distinct settings: from the neutral space of the white cube to more psychologically charged, staged environments. This progression reinforces a movement from surface to depth, from objectivity to interiority. As viewers, we are led through a selection of works that resonate with a growing sense that, in contemporary life, "time is out of joint."

Within this framework, Reichling employs strategies of decadence, theatricality, and artifice—not as ends in themselves, but as tools for critical reflection. He plays with roles and ambiguity, suggesting that the dissociative states often diagnosed as disorders may also reflect broader cultural conditions: the fragmentation of identity, the blur between real and performed selves, and the emotional disorientation of our time.