

The notion of the contemporary is by now an ever-present, though ungraspable carrier for anxieties and pressures, cultural expectations and one size-fits-all alibis. What does it mean "to be of the moment" or "ahead of one's time"? With this in mind, should art even strive to be 'contemporary' and how might a certain degree of perverseness or grotesqueness entailed in the condition of being made now be expressed or find form? Anne Speier's first solo exhibition in the gallery 'Feeling the Contemporary' comprised of three sculptures and three large mixed media paper collages, presents an idiosyncratic response. For instance, why not take the dinosaur - a creature long consigned to the bedrock by a mass extinction event as an anachronistic motif. The sculptures are blind beings composed of only legs and 3 metre long tongues. They occupy the gallery's room testing its dimensions and surface with the only sense available to them. There are limitations but also great pleasure in this. If the resources needed to achieve a sense of what shapes our time, might shift from the eyes to the body - what kind of bodies might that produce? On tangents, hang collages featuring a cast of women characters (pointedly non-norm) with fluid, rippling, or concertinaed torsos: a runner traversing a borrowed windy landscape, fortune tellers in a debate with a dysfunctional crystal ball, and three dancers in expressive world's of their own. (Google the phrase: „sich ausserhalb der Zeit bewegen", and you will find a link to documentary about Berlin's Bar 25.) Art historical quotations both canonical and from the recent past lurk and overlap in these images; ones taking us from the Romantics, through Avantgarde Modernist collage to actual painting discourse. For example, concerning the post-digital mannered blob of impasto paint. Speier's composite, strangely familiar figures employ mixed media techniques: she was inspired by Saul Steinberg's idea of attempting to find the right painterly style technique for each individual. Here digital imaging and collating tools and high art materiality both come into play. Speier's works swing endlessly around in the revolving door between the two. The physical world provides for the artist a kind of reality check. As these works emerge into the fleeting contemporary they do so with their cultural baggage in tow, their ingredients on display and in the process of digestion. -

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