



SAMUEL GEORGY & CULTURE CAFE *LAZARUS ELNADY*

OCT 29 - DEC 04 2022

Kaiserwache is delighted to present LAZARUS ELNADY, an exhibition specifically developed for KW in collaboration with Culture Cafe. Samuel Georgy, Culture Cafe and KW cordially invite you to the show's opening on October 29, 2022 at 7 pm.

Working across media, Samuel Georgy's exhibitions meld sculpture, performance, text, sound and video to investigate the poetics of objects.

A message from the artist:

In early 2021 I got wind of a local story while beginning research for this exhibition at KW. Legend has it that there once was a biker named "Lazarus Elnady" who made their money as a trickster and con artist around the region. The criminal was never caught by police and suddenly just disappeared into thin air. Lazarus was last seen entering a public restroom in Freiburg. Supposedly the abandoned motorbike had been rusting away for ages at the exact spot it was left at until it disappeared as well. A criminal vanishing in a public restroom? Maybe at KW? Such a coincidence left me no other choice than to base the whole exhibition around it. From what I could gather, stories around this figure made their rounds in the late 90's to early 00's. At this point I had the clear impression of dealing with an urban legend. Even the name seems too fitting, because this kind of occupation surely requires one to start life anew repeatedly by changing identities. Although at first I could not find any useful information about this lore, my curiosity still lingered on. And as if it couldn't have gone differently, I coincidentally met a person who swore to have seen Lazarus in flesh and blood in the 90's. Not only that, they also helped me discover that there actually was a whole bunch of people claiming to have seen or to even have known in some capacity this person called "Lazarus Elnady". Since most sightings took place at a bistro in Freiburg which Lazarus frequented for some time, I will refer to the witnesses I managed to track down collectively as "Culture Cafe".

I hereby want to express my gratitude to Culture Cafe for kindly sharing their stories and collaborating on this project. As per our agreement I will abstain from sharing their identities. We had prolonged conversations which produced a full book's worth of notes. I wanted to get some kind of clarity. However, contradicting accounts complicated the story even more. The most bewildering contention they had was on whether Lazarus was a man or a woman. I've heard multiple times of *them* being a conscientious objector, which, if so, might give an indication in this regard, but honestly I still don't have a clue what's what. "Lazarus Elnady" may have been more than one person for all I know. With every additional story I was privy to, my mental image of Lazarus turned hazier. Over time the ambiguity and lack of information around Lazarus which turned out to be the anchor which would hold all elements of the exhibition in place.

Complete Silence. Establishing shot of a moving motorcyclist in profile view. Helmet and leather jacket. Camera moving at the same speed, thereby smudging all details of the landscape into a Richter painting. Rider calmly observes the scenery flying past us, all the while appearing completely in tune with the vehicle. Strange alien sounds set in, fear sets in until the sound becomes recognizable as the mix of wind noise and the violent roar of the motorcycle exhaust. The sound of exhilaration. Motorcycle drives out of frame. Long hold on Richter painting. Cut to black. Title. LAZARUS ELNADY.

What you just read was the first paragraph of a scrapped screenplay by Wim Wenders who appears to have taken a liking to the story far before I knew about it. Unfortunately I cannot disclose how I've gotten my hands on this. The film should supposedly have been based on the life of Lazarus and portray an agonized criminal on the run. The project never found its way beyond a fragmented first draft and probably for good reason. Obviously the lack of information and the extreme contradictions in the circulating stories may pose a hindrance, but telling the story of such a character may just as well be a bad idea because it would be impossible to bring Lazarus to life without at the same time exploiting the immoral and problematic aspects of this life for entertainment.

One witness described Lazarus as being a photographer or filmmaker at heart and admitted to being in possession of some original photographs. *Did Wenders know of this specifically?*
Culture Cafe had their reservations about putting on this exhibition. As a mark of respect for the story/stories of Lazarus Elnady (whoever they may have been) and their associates, we decided not to include any archival material that might provoke further investigation out of curiosity or in pursuit of litigation. Also Culture Cafe and I will refrain from recounting any more stories than necessary to prevent the creation of any new myths.

In view of these limitations, I proposed to collaborate on sculptural works that would be open to interpretation all the while should invoke something of Lazarus' presence. Consequently the work is as much about Lazarus Elnady as it is about Culture Cafe and gives free range to imagine what kind of person Lazarus Elnady was, if they ever were. On another level the show could also be thought of as a filming location presenting its props, speculating on what Wender's movie might have looked like.

About the Artist:

Samuel Georgy (b. 1994 in Cairo, Egypt) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. He graduated from École de Design et Haute École d'Art du Valais with a bachelor's degree in Visual Arts. He is currently studying at Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main.

About Kaiserwache:

Kaiserwache serves as a platform for forward-thinking artists to work in and reflect on a unique space. The hygiene facility known to Freiburg's residents as "Kaiserwache" was due to its central location in the city and its immediacy to the banks of the Dreisam a well-frequented building. With the final decommissioning of its original purpose the question arises as to what an alternative use of the heritage-protected building might look like. A question whose relevance will only increase, especially in view of the rising lack of space in Freiburg, despite many buildings being vacant. With this in mind, KW presents itself as an offspace concerned with its own temporality, interested in suggesting alternatives beyond its interim use. Acting as a catalyst, the specificity of the space facilitates a discourse on a multitude of issues surrounding the institution of the public toilet.

Curated by Christina Sperling, Rahel Zahlten, Marco Spitz and Ilja Zaharov.

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