

Gabbi Cattani

Chaoskampf Tutorials

5 March – 15 May 2022

MEWO Kunsthalle

Bahnhofstraße 1

D-87700, Memmingen (DE)

Curated by Lorenzo Graf

For his first institutional solo exhibition, Gabbi Cattani has developed two video works from his performance at the 19 Biennale Mediterranea in San Marino in 2021.

Chaoskampf Tutorials, 2021-2022 (on the left) consists of two wall projections of a narrative text, in German and English, read by a voice-over. The projected images appear pixelated, partly blurred, as if their origin lay somewhere between early digital technology and found, low-quality film material. Instead, it is fictively reenacted archive footage. For the production, Cattani projected the text he had written onto the wall and filmed it with one of the first digital compact cameras: we see the film of a film, the projection of a projection. This transmission opens up an intermediate space for unexpected new meanings to arise. The media-generated liminality lays the foundation for the ritual transition to which the visitors are guided by the narrative. In its exuberant flow of descriptions, digressions, quotations and poetic liberties, the text describes a transition not to a becoming-adult, but to a remaining-immature. Self-determination and economic autonomy are deceptive - they replace one dependency (the familial one) with another (the societal one). Therefore, the mythological and psychoanalytical figure of the *puer aeternus* (eternal boy) is to be embraced, remaining in the intermediate state of an impossible detachment from the family nest. Paradoxically, complete freedom could only be achieved through the acceptance of constant external determination. Thus, the first part focuses on a game of chance in which inheritances are raffled off and the second on the motif of the dog that is fed on leftovers: both suggesting models of existence in complete dependence on others.

In *Holdin' the dog (d'après Edward Kienholz)*, 2021 (on the right), the Nikon Coolpix L5, Cattani's beloved compact camera, makes its appearance again. In this work, the focus is on two men in an unusual pose. In a domestic setting, with homemade masks and props, they hold a statue of a dog upside-down. They are reenacting a sculptural work by the US artist Edward Kienholz (1927-1994), who became known for his socially critical tableaux. Kienholz' 1986 homonymous work, restaged by Cattani, addresses the deeply rooted presence of religious and political ideologies in the psychology of US families. Two aspects stand out in Cattani's adaptation: he exchanges the American flags with Italian ones, thus referencing to his own country of origin. Then, the dog statue establishes a connection to the work *Chaoskampf Tutorials*, which features the motif of the dog as a scavenger. Ideological influence and a life on dependency come together in an allusive image, open to multiple interpretations. Through its ambivalence and its oversize, the projected image becomes a trigger of unease. Gabbi Cattani (born 1990 in Rome) lives in Frankfurt am Main and studies at the Städelschule. The show is the second part of the exhibition project *One Thing Left to Try* curated by Lorenzo Graf.

Gabbi Cattani (Rome, 1990) is an Italian artist living in Frankfurt am Main. Cattani works in performance, installation, poetry and video. His works featured in institutions and museums such as Mediterranean Biennale (RSM); Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art (IT); Fondazione Prada (IT); OUTPOST Gallery, Norwich (UK); Return gallery (IR). Cattani is currently studying at Städelschule with Gerard Byrne.