

PETRINE.

Lenard Giller

sediment

20.10.2025 — 20.12.2025

The *Messingkauf* Dialogues, from the German *Der Messingkauf*, is arguably Bertolt Brecht's most pivotal text, serving as an imprint of thoughts for his Epic theatre movement and dialectics of dramaturgy. The unfinished work, written between 1939 and 1942, is a lengthy jumble of fragmented notes on theatre's potentialities beyond simple stage narrative, in which form is a malleable device to provoke critical self-reflection. These scribbles produce a palimpsest wherein layers of textual sediment trace the seismic changes Brecht yielded in theatre.

In the original German, *Messingkauf* translates directly to "Buying Brass"—a far more apt distillation than its official English title, considering the text's allegorical conversations, where a merchant approaches a brass band trio in hopes of acquiring their instruments for the metal's monetary value. His request prompts a debate on the instruments' immaterial significance, defined in byproducts that can't really be codified—say, the emotional power of their music, or their histories of fabrication—but are nonetheless embedded in the brass, reflecting nuance imported in their existence. Buying Brass is ultimately, then, a parable, laying bare the inherent relativity of 'meaning' as a situational construct.

This ethos parallels the work of Lenard Giller, whose show at Petrine, titled *sediment*, is a meditation on the oblique meaning ascribed to a given object within the context of its presentation, and how such interpretations are contingent upon circumstances, revealing both the fluidity of objecthood and frameworks that dictate their supposed value.

This meta-cognition is a technique in which form itself is a methodology for questioning broader systems of meaning. In *sediment*, the pliability of form is wielded in new works exemplified in the construction of tableaux. These works span a variety of media that, like the brass instruments, resist precise categorisation, instead functioning more broadly as players in a dialectical dance enacted in a choreography of the space.

On the ground floor, the pairing of a drawing with a black-and-white Xerox print hints at a further embodiment of duality condensed to a single work. These follow suit with experimental structure in the conceptual lineage propagated by Brecht's Epic theatre, in which he sought to establish a dialectical understanding of theatre, allowing for clear delineations of the fictional nature of stage production while still inviting an emotional connection to the plot informed by that same knowledge.

This extends to an intervention in the gallery's basement, where slices of a tree trunk inhabit the space's entirety. The tree's limbs, like amputated parts, are situated to occupy an in-betweenness, with the smaller fragment wedged into the entrance of the gallery storage area, keeping it ajar like a doorstep, thus breaking the fourth wall. The work functions as a found object, which does not necessarily require skill due to its readymade character, making this a twofold move that is both cerebral yet borne from gut intuition. Devoid of its natural petrichor and beset in almost darkness, it's obviously been transported from its point of origin, and it is in the act of movement and redistribution that the work bolsters the query of how systems colour an object's relevance.

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The presentation perhaps culminates in a series of boxes filled with what amounts to brass ‘sawdust’ Giller sourced in Rome, and for which, in fact, he paid the market price.

— *Caroline Elbaor*

Giller’s recent and upcoming exhibitions include 50 litre, Amsterdam (upcoming); MACRO, Rome (2024); Bar Civil, Düsseldorf (2024); The Shop, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2023); and Petrine, Paris (2022).

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