

Focal Point Gallery is pleased to present 'Exhibition for Go-Getters', the first major UK solo exhibition of the Austrian artist Torsten Slama. The exhibition comprises the artist's work spanning over the past seven years and includes a series of new works made especially for Southend. This new series of drawings and paintings showcases some of the influence the region has had on the artist's work over the past two years during frequent visits.

Slama's images of abandoned avant-garde architecture and esoteric technology bare a strong relationship to the diverse architectural influences and industrial ruins of south Essex. Each a familiar modern relic, these scenes appear to sit suspended in an indeterminable time, in a potential future and one gone by.

'Exhibition for Go-Getters' might seem to employ provocative usage of some outdated term describing those who have better things to do than to gaze dreamy-eyed at moody pictures of houses and things. This is true, also, but yet, who are go-getters really? What is the definition? It seems straightforward, and it is: a go-getter is the type of person who is able to realize her needs and then to go and get, to materialize need-fulfillment. While this thus entitled show presents a collection of pictorial representations of exactly the kind of nature which seems non-contemporary, non-interactive, non-interventionist to the point of droll, the artist refuses to accept, what it implies to the common mind: that someone painting and drawing houses, cars, and flying things, exhibiting magical thought patterns commonly ascribed to children, depicts them because she is somehow unable to go and get their physical counterparts, thus making do with effigies. Instead, is it not important to state that the act of producing imagery is just as viable and positive as building bridges and pushing buttons? And the same should go, and indeed goes, for the act of looking at images.

What is this thought anyway? This idea that the world is a storage space filled with goods, and it is the prerogative as well as the obligation of individuals to transform big parts of this collection into private property? This is modern economics and modern psychology. If we go back into the past, maybe only a few hundred years, we are suddenly reminded of something else: the mystery of creation – the will to power. Is the artist maybe, just like the successful entrepreneur, much more than a go-getter, namely, a go-creator? And can we maybe also eradicate the 'go' from this equation? Because the will, the intent, the want, is nothing but a reminder to the creative force, because the

creative force exists only because the will, the want, the intent exists.

This artist is not brandishing the flag of those cross with life, those, having turned their backs to life, hands in their pockets, with sagging shoulders, who are unable to go and get. She is a go-getter. And if she is not, as an artist she should at least be able to dream herself into a go-getter until, according to the theories of Zhuang Zhu, it is becoming patently unclear whether we have a discontented dreamer and failure dreaming of being a go-getter, or a go-getter dreaming of being said failure. In dreaming this dream, the transformation takes place: the will to get is replaced by the will to make. In this vein, her exhibition becomes an exhibition for all go-getters.

Torsten Slama

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