

*Something that was once canny and familiar, but then became lost, or at least became estranged, a loss due to the passage of time. Something one no longer belongs to, from which one is de-familiarized, de-realized. Brought into contact again with what has been lost, it feels like a dream.*

Josef Strau

In his artistic practice Steve Bishop explores how mental constitutions can be materialized and conveyed in space, through installations often involving personal belongings and mementos. Fragile inner states, which initially have no shape, texture, or color, are the starting points for immersive installations. In the interplay between space and subject, the mood that is created—the bodily experience of the surrounding— becomes the guiding aesthetic principle. By subtly distorting familiar, often intimate domestic scenarios, Bishop creates intermediate worlds in which concepts of time are suspended, and clear boundaries between private and public space, exhibition and non-exhibition are blurred.

At the center of the exhibition *Start Over Every Morning* in the Remise of the Kunstverein Braunschweig is a simple white kitchen unit which—section by section— surreally extends over the entire length of the space. Here the profoundly everyday nature of the countertop meets the attempt to grasp abstract concepts of infinity. “We can dream of the future, but that timescale is nothing, compared to the future that will come after that.” (Bishop)

We encounter the remnants of a celebration strewn across the kitchen counter and continuing outside; leftover cake has been carefully stowed away in Tupperware boxes and in the adjoining garden, a protective cover has already been laid over a set of garden chairs that is no longer required. Rainwater collects in their center: a natural indicator of the passage of time. The only sound is jazz instrumentals drifting unwaveringly from a radio. Faced with the objects, a longing to preserve fleeting situations repeatedly arises, no matter how temporary the moment might be. They testify to Bishop's interest in sentimentally charged objects that subconsciously evoke memories or desires, and are thus able to refer to the past and the future in equal measure. “If you can have a genuine empathetic or sentimental reaction to an object, then it can transcend that “plastic” quality of kitsch you describe. I look for that duality.” (Bishop)

Laminate flooring, PVC table and chair sets, acrylic carpets, viscose curtains, polyethylene covers, melamine-coated chipboard—the repeated use of synthetic materials is striking. Even the seemingly casually placed leftovers are elaborately produced imitation foodstuffs in PVC, an already established element of Bishop's work. Plastics, which try to imitate wood, glass, or aluminum with their processed surfaces, are always inscribed with an act of deception and a yearning for something

more precious. At the same time, there is a paradox inscribed to this material that is associated with disposable products, but, because of its persistence, lasts a particularly long time and is difficult to recycle.

In the smaller room of the Remise, found photos are juxtaposed with pages of text from a largely forgotten self-help group *Re-evaluation Counseling*. Inspired by the ideologies and methods of Scientology, the internationally operating sect, which was founded in the mid-1950s, dedicated itself to its members' emotional catharsis. Slogans call for self-empowerment and optimization, and one might also discern from the neat surroundings that a desire for structure, for inner and outer clarity, seems to be as desirable as it is acutely endangered. Like *Re-evaluation Counseling*, which addresses existential questions in a conversational tone, Steve Bishop's seemingly familiar interiors also prompt one to contemplate the discrepancy between the ideals of life and reality.

Steve Bishop (born 1983 in Toronto, CA) lives in London. He has recently realized solo exhibitions at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018), Supportico Lopez with6817, Los Angeles (2016), and Carlos/Ishikawa, London (2015/2013).

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