

# BEFORE YOUR EYES OPEN

Laura Hinrichsmeyer, Luisa Kasalicky, Andrea Zabric

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Curated by GiG Munich



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We all see the same thing when our eyes are closed, whether we are a man, a fascist, or a nomad. This is not darkness, but a kind of afterimage, similar to those afterimages of the sun painted by the Polish modernist, Władysław Strzemiński, in the late 1940s. These afterimages are more than physiological phenomena, visual impressions that persist long after the original light source is gone, our photoreceptors lagging behind, too tired and desensitised to adjust to changed lighting conditions. We can also think of the afterimage as all those things we carry with us as we go about our daily lives, the routines and organisational structures - those endless to-do lists which keep us awake at night. More broadly they consist of the economies we operate in, the society in which we function, the histories and cultures in which we are participants.

Painters encounter these persistent images every time they begin to paint. As the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, so memorably tells us when discussing the work of Francis Bacon: a painter's canvas is never blank. It is always full, too full to start working straight away, filled with "things in the painter's head, or around him, or in his studio." There are always "givens" and a painter must decide, which of these to use, and more importantly, which of these are mere hindrances, obstacles even, and must be done away.

The painter, the fascist and the nomad see the same things in the dark, but they do not act the same way towards them. A painter like Bacon selects. Fascists on the other hand, take great pleasure in destroying certain socio-political structures, as this gives them a feeling of power. There is much nihilism to be found here. But the nomad, the nomad sees everything, the burdens and the obstacles, and nevertheless manages to forge a path, as if these structures were no hindrance, as if the space was left wide open, unmarked, smooth to travel. Nomads do not use the obstacles to determine their route - they do not say, today I will travel from this point to that, map in hand, following stars and compass, because I wish to reach a destination and settle there. Obstacles do not determine the direction in which nomads head. They throw our maps to the wind and carry their movement with them.

The three painters of "Before your eyes open" - Laura Hinrichsmeyer, Luisa Kasalicky and Andrea Zabric - retain a nomadic position in painting. Of different generations and backgrounds, they share an acute awareness of the historical and cultural "givens" of a painter's practice, especially in its modernist guise, but these do not determine the trajectories their work takes. They still select, just not one given or another, or a point to be reached. Rather they select a direction, which allows them to operate as a point moving in-between lines: for Hinrichsmeyer this is text in combination with images and a deep understanding of painting's materiality; for Kasalicky in her most recent series of work, light, colour and the tensions of their juxtaposition. Zabric's practice, so embedded within art history in her use of fresco technique, holds up a mirror to the nomadic subject, where the self is distributed in open space, like scattered fragments of broken shells found on a beach.