

'I Can't See Anyone Else Smiling In Here'
curated by Holger OttenNorbert Arns, James Clarkson, Roderick Hietbrink, Kate Owens,
Ulrich Pester, Nedko Solakov, Jack Strange, Honza Zamojski

(June 6 – July 12, 2014)

Her face is strewn with countless and erratic freckles, so that in midsummer the contours of her lips and nose dissolve. Despite the flair that gives her, of which she is aware, she doesn't like it that much. "I can't see anyone else smiling in here." Ha ha. Absorbed in thought she fastens her racing bike to a lamppost.

Today, too, most of the visitors are here to meet others, to talk, to be entertained, to drink and to have fun, a typical summer exhibition of light appearance. Sure, most people want to see a beautiful exhibition or even better an interesting one, of which they are told that it is interesting, because the concept is so interesting. She cannot see the concept but doesn't say anything—it's better that way, she believes. An abstract assemblage smiles at her.

She looks around and must think that there are few people who can still be really enthusiastic. Due to the many exhibition openings that she visits she also doesn't quite manage it, that thing called enthusiasm. After all something needs to enthuse you. And when do you get surprised by an exhibition or only by a work, or by art? Maybe I'm just too superficial, she asks herself. And if so, as Nietzsche would say, it is because of depth.

She pages through the notebook of an artist. Without her asking somebody tells her it is the last of ten, and that they are all identical. The artist copied them himself, by hand. She likes the thought that nine others that bought it are paging through it now and read "remember the PAIN poster".

A life-sized stick figure presses against a wall with stoical calm, as if it wanted to bring everything down in a controlled way. Suddenly all the figures that had just been eyeing her kindly seem different to her. But she cannot grasp the feeling. A melody comes to her mind: "Cause it's changed from something comfortable to something else instead."

She stands in front of a small-scale picture, the only one that is not looking at her. It seems familiar. But she cannot remember. Do we ourselves make the decision on what touches us? Does it catch our eye or is it eye-catching? The abstract figure is embroidered onto a napkin with only a few stitches. She turns away.

An acquaintance approaches her. "No, I haven't seen the video yet," she says. "Tabula rasa! ..." he continues. She interrupts him, "Recently at the train station I wanted to buy a baked apple pie and a coffee at *McDonald's*. I got a bag of apple slices instead. Must be new." He counters, "Apple pies haven't been on the menu for a long time now." She says, "Yes, I guess one doesn't really go there anyway. I mean, a bag of apple slices from McDonald's that looks like a pack of gummy bears and there are apple slices inside—organic!"

(Holger Otten)

I see him standing in the gallery, slouching and somewhat discontented. Discontented, because he has just ascertained that his friend ("Let's meet there!") isn't there yet and he, an awkward foreign body, is now nodding in intervals staged to fit in with the discussions of the rest of the crowd. Hoping they will be able to hold his attention for an idle quarter of an hour, he looks at the exhibited objects for the first time.

The exhibited objects look back trustingly. (As every dog owner knows, one cannot overestimate the value of a trusting appeal as a means of establishing a connection. This however is not the case here, since he, anyway, doesn't have anything better to do for the next quarter of an hour.) They look at him, smiling slightly. One looks away. Despite himself, he finds himself smiling back. At the same time, a vague dread that behind this amiable veneer lurk dark apparitions of places that cannot be travelled to on his recent graduate salary, a salary that is somehow also applicable for not so recent graduates. Not even to mention having the time. Oh, to be an artist. His life would be much easier! There, too, they are one step ahead of him, he notes.

Dot, dot, comma, dash, he thinks, old nursery rhymes popping into his head as he decides to stick to the surface. When do splotches and lines become a face? Or a figure? He thinks of Paul Klee, about whose work he read – all jittery fingers and dancing eyes – that you can see the figurative even in the abstract. And he thinks, what an exceedingly acute and congenial person that had to have been, what with all these nice figures and pastel colours. A very private thought.

And apropos. He eyes the summery, dyed fabric (also to be observed on some visitors; pastel lemon yellow is *the* colour of the season) of an extremely curious object and thinks that he may have read too much Agatha Christie. *Guilty pleasure* is what that's called and he cannot imagine a more appropriate term. "Did you know that Coca Cola is changing their formula?" "Better Coca Cola than me", he thinks, but is suddenly caught up in a debate with the newly arrived friend, who has brought someone else, hello, about the incessant ongoing demonisation of ingredients that only changes in its specifics, also concerning perfumes.

After the first feeling of relief of not being alone anymore, never alone again, a slight melancholy takes hold of him. And he steals away from the cluster of people (now chatting about organic fruit) and looks around and there they are looking at him. "Sing along," they whisper, "and it might just get you through."

(Jenny Dirksen)

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Honza Zamojski

Untitled, 2014

Pencil and black carbon paper on paper; 22.9 x 30.5 cm

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Untitled, 2014

Pencil and black carbon paper on paper; 22.9 x 30.5 cm

Honza Zamojskikk

Untitled, 2014

Pencil and red carbon paper on paper; 22.9 x 30.5 cm

James Clarkson

Arrangement of Chance Forms (No.1), 2014

Foam behind glass in wooden frame; 59,5 x 42 cm

Roderick Hietbrink

The Living Room, 2011

HD-video (00:08:05); variable dimensions

Nedko Solakov

The Chubby Knight, 2012

Black ink on paper; 19 x 28 cm

Honza Zamojski

Pushing, 2014

Steel rod; 198 x 177 cm

Kate Owens

Affair at Styles (pink & blue), 2011

Soft drink, cotton T-shirt; various dimensions

Kate Owens

Affair at Styles (purple & yellow), 2011

Soft drink, cotton T-shirt; various dimensions

Jack Strange

Missing Notebook, 2009

Ink on paper; 14 x 9 x 1 cm

Edition of 10 uniques

Jack Strange

Lump Inside A Lump (juggling it), 2013

Soil, plaster, wire, sculptamold, iPods, 3 x video files (15'00" each)

Jack Strange

Lump Inside A Lump (swimming it), 2013

Soil, plaster, wire, sculptamold, iPods, 2 x video files (7'00" each)

Ulrich Pester

Nest, 2009

Oil on wood; 50 x 40 cm

Norbert Arns

*Gästezimmer, 2014**Betty, 2012* (Cross stitch on napkin; 29 x 23 cm), 2x MDF, ingrain wallpaper, dispersion paint ; je 100 x 70 cm