

**A conversation between Whitney Claffin, Emily Hanson, Carmen-Sibha Keiso, and Teak Ramos
January 19, 2024.**

Whitney Claffin: Guten Tag! <3 it me

Emily Hanson: hiii

Carmen-Sibha Keiso: Hey

Teak Ramos: I'm in this bitch

EH: We were rocking w 4 time zones that was crazy lol

WC: *pitbull voice* worldwide

TR: Also all different vibes bc different parts of our day

WC: Gonna just blast that now that we've hung the show, I thought of the gallery space in 3 sections- "lobby," "kiosk/ street/ interstitial," and "brain room" (1st room, middle room, backroom accordingly)...

TR: The framed paintings vs. not framed vs. the nailed edge painting...

WC: I would love to frame a lot of work that I make, but I refuse to make "artist frames," so, I decided to have the *Die Nacht* series framed to unify it... but then there's others that I just go buck on, like with the nails... I wanted *Die Nacht* in black frames to match the exterior of the building the nightclub is in, but DREI suggested the white frames, which do look cleaner.. Basically I gave them the white frames in a compromise so I could hang the Oasis painting in the funky spot on the wall in the middle room, like a sticker.

TR: Hahah thats sick

EH: Love Oasis there

TR: Did you bring the embellishments from home studio or were they German purchases?

WC: Everything is from here in Germany!

TR: I like that the more quiet moody paintings are trickled throughout as like breathing room but breathing room is Whitney's Language

CSK: Let's talk about music... I'm suddenly seeing Slipknot in these paintings

EH: *Here* feels like Pavement reference

WC: It so is!

EH: Had to be <3

WC: Yeah, *Here* is like the opposite of *Hate*... like the same country but diff moods... Wait, Carmen, do you mean Slipknot the band or like the knot?

CSK: The band... Also a potent LA energy especially in *Hate*

WC: Oh yea, idk much about Slipknot, defo more into the knot as a concept.. But, yea, LA tracks, it's so weird but it really reminds me of LA here A LOT... like the architecture & vegetation...

CSK: Wouldn't it be fun if all these inferred bands were played at the nacht club? Although I'm looking in from such a distilled place, like an iPad screen on the other side of the country, the paintings (maybe through the musical referents) hold an interiority, like the associations allow me to be in there, in the club that is...

TR: Yes they welcome you!

WC: OK, chill, yea this is maybe what I'm trying to get at w the paintings- like mad dank, but we will take you on!

EH: Yea, "in the club" is kind of the opposite of the out of place feeling in general in Germany

WC: The first time I went to Die Nacht it was bc Jakob from the gallery let me know Michael Mayer was playing that night, and since then it's been steady local DJs and it has been FUN like, actually fun. It's like rly chill vibes- DJ smokes ciggies, bartender too, everyone just shows up to dance, v non judgemental as far as i can tell...

CSK: Sort of like you generate your own safe space or something in whatever context the German town has found you in... What's the name of the town?

WC: Mönchengladbach

CSK: Do you think it's too American?

WC: nononononoooo... omg there was one night at Die Nacht where the DJ played like a gabber remix of Macklemore and that was when I felt most US ... like knowing all the words like "I wear my granddad's clothes..."

TR: Does everyone stare at your shaved head?

WC: Not really.

TR: They would point at me from across Ikea lmao

CSK: Does an American ever think something is too American? I don't think that phenomena exists...

WC: I think if anyone is bringing that energy it's me lol

CSK: Yeah tbh I'm interested in your being 'off NYC'

EH: True it's like you're in a homestay on an exchange trip or something... speaking from experience of the one time I left North America

CSK: Is that like a coping mechanism for enduring the sudden living shift to make it feel easier or like you have more agency abroad?

WC: I just had been there for 14 years and never thought I would leave, and really shaded/ hated ppl that did... but that had a lot to do w me being broke, like, "ok, cool have fun in Eurozone while I TOIL!"

CSK: Totally, that's what Manhattan does to a mfr... People don't even leave the island.

EH: It's sad how hard it feels to get off it sometimes

TR: Manhattan is inhumane

CSK: Context really is a strong device for this show which normally I would consider paintings not to be too limited by that

WC: Yeah, like, I went to Berlin in August and finally saw the Neue Nationalgalerie and was like *wire meme* Daaaammnnn ok so everyone who had some coin in their 20s saw this already... and seeing that shit irl in my 20s would have made such a huge impact, but alas, I am here now.

And I think that's why I feel a bit shy with this show... it's like all the work I made is me saying, "Wow! It's so cool here!" and I feel like a total tourist...

TR: I think a lot of artists can identify with that tho!

WC: That's true, and I've seen it in the reverse, like Germans coming to NYC and being like :O

TR: I'm always so impressed by Anna Sophie bc she has such fervor when she is traveling to see all the things and it is totally understandable to lose it when you have lived somewhere like NYC so long

WC: She is so fierce tho, a legend

TR: But also I wonder if it comes with age or with the development of one's practice where you have a path you are on and you don't want outside influences to derail...

CSK: That's the sincerity though which is what makes you a good artist

WC: Yea I was just like, "ima make so much work! and EXPERIMENT!" and then was like oh fuck right, I have to do a show...

TR: My coworkers were hounding me for being behind watching *Gilded Age* and I was like the show is literally too inspiring to me. I don't want it to change the works I'm making. I have to watch it when my show is finished

EH: hahah

CSK: Amazing. The word inspirational is on my 'say more' list for 2024

TR: 'Say more' is on mine LOL!

WC: "I'm good luv, enjoy" is mine lol

TR: Also me and Whitney were laughing at "I'll play nice, but no thank you"

CSK: Does inspiration happen immediately? Or is it retroactive?

WC: oofa, it's a mix, sometimes I start w a strong conviction that's later abandoned, sometimes I arrive at something I dig my heels into

CSK: Maybe these paintings are about a departure from NYC more so than an arrival to Deutschland

WC: I think that's fair

EH: How is your German now, Whitney? Have u been doing Duolingo over there?

WC: Ugh my German is like better than it was in June, but not anything I'm proud of now. I just lost my 41 day streak on Duolingo... it's been a long week lol and I get mad at Duo like, "I've been speaking IRL, leave me be!!!!"

EH: *Cigarettes* feels like a moment of grace to me, like if I were standing in front of it

WC: It's so boss they still have ciggie machines here!

EH: Was Deja Vu your regular? Such a good name.

WC: Yeah, I would go there once or twice a month... I feel funny that the painting I made of that bar looks so aggro bc my feelings for it are only warm... but, it's like deeper shit, like driving nails into something is a lifestyle...

EH: the dark murkiness can be kind of cozy

TR: Yeah totally and bar darkness is key to coziness

WC: yea or like the therapy / maternal energy they provided just left me to face my own shit lol

EH: Ideal bar enviro

WC: A female bartender is so essential

EH: frr wombcare lmao

WC: Oh yea, that's defo how I've found my place here, like smol bars over everything

CSK: I did that in NYC the first month I was there and refused to like DM anyone I knew in the city. I'd go to bars and people would strike up convo. It was really comforting.

TR: Any clue why my faucet would start leaking randomly?

CSK: Loose tap handles

WC: Ghosts... haunted !

CSK: The ball bearing in the handle is probably jammed

EH: Go off Carmen

TR: Ok I'm sorry I gotta go! This just got real!

WC: Let's call it!

CSK: Godspeed

EH: luv u all

WC: We had a TIME !