

Galerie Max Mayer

Worringer Straße 64  
40211 Düsseldorf

Sarah Kürten - drowning in formaldehyde  
13.5. – 25.6.2016

On May 12, 2016, at 8:13 PM, Roy Huschenbeth wrote:

Dears,

Here's my draft of the text. As you might have guessed by now, it's really been a struggle for me. On one hand, the exhibition is so dense yet coherent that I didn't think it needed any kind of supporting framework. On the other, the past few months – as you all know – have been a period of personal transformation on various levels, and that has also affected the things I want to talk about and the ways I can talk about them.

Looking back, most of the texts I had written before were so full of pseudo-academic gibberish that totally missed the mark of the people they were actually supposed to address. Of course it had a lot to do with fear, defensiveness and a desire for safety. That's the stuff I'd like to be rid of now, at least a bit – taking more risks, being more polarizing and, of course, more vulnerable instead.

This text is the first step in that direction, and it's difficult for me to judge its qualities, but that's what you are there for.

Warm, feverish greetings – I hope I'm feeling better by tomorrow evening,

Roy

*No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee*

John Donne, Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, 1624

1

Honestly, I have no idea what to write about Sarah Kürten's exhibition *drowning in formaldehyde* at Galerie Max Mayer. It's definitely not because there isn't anything interesting to discover. It's the complete opposite! Magnetic fields shimmer, unfurling before our senses – yet their tensions are as fragile as their nuances are rich. Of course language is central. Enlarged on the gallery walls, the context of its presentation and the materiality of its framing laid out on the operation table, it feels like we can slowly meander through language itself. But to what end?

No, there isn't a manual for this exhibition. Poetics doesn't have to be understood. Its seduction lies in its evasiveness, its reluctance, in its being possible, or possibly different.

2

Every formulation is the expression of subjectivity. Likewise a subjectivity is needed to transform words, in the moment of experiencing them, back into meaning. The differences that emerge in that moment of translation take us through the ambiguity of language towards a recognition of ourselves in the consciousness of others. "Wahrheit gibt es nur zweien." (Truth can only exist in twos) writes Hannah Arendt. You can only find it in active life. So, go out, get drunk on the hurling centrifugal forces of meaning, go forward and back, move in circles – become strangers to yourselves, get lost – in the oscillations of associations, in the rhythm of language. Be curious and amazed, unsettle yourselves; what will ultimately be decisive about this exhibition are the thoughts and conversations that take place between and inside of you.

3

At every moment of our existence, we are faced with the question of how we want to live. Melville's resigning *Bartleby* – and not his big adventure novel *Moby Dick* – was the pop literature of the young Western-European protest movement of the past years – from the Indignados to Occupy. Yet this year, at the very latest, the end of the end of history has made it all the way to the provinces of Baden-Württemberg: we can't afford an "I would prefer not to" anymore. Discover your contemporaries and recognize yourselves. Don't wait until tomorrow, no man is an island.