

GLOBAL ALLSTARS

An exhibition review by Ashley Cook



+ An Interview with Linda Voorwinde



KAKOPHONIE DER DISKREPANZ

LINDA VOORWINDE at AUSTELLUNGSRAUM FRIEDENGASSE

Kakophonie Der Diskrepanz, the newest exhibition by Dutch artist Linda Voorwinde, debuted on September 2, 2023 at Austellungsraum Friedengasse, a squat in Zurich, Switzerland. The space is run by three individuals who took over occupation of the building and turned it into a sort of complex that incorporates a meeting space for people to get organized, an exhibition space and a bookstore called Goragora. They also host screenings of political films by Filmclub Populaire. Austellungsraum Friedengasse participates in a long-standing history of squats in Switzerland as well as the rich history of art in Zurich. Their presence is amongst over sixty other internationally recognized art spaces in the city, including the famous nightclub Cabaret Voltaire that was founded by Hugo Ball and Emma Hennings in 1916 and held a pivotal role in the formation of the anarchist art movement, Dada.

Linda Voorwinde has lived and worked in Switzerland since 2013 and has formed roots as an artist working between local DIY cultural spaces and established art institutions. Her studio practice has most recently resulted in two previous exhibitions, *A Crack in the Dam* at Windhager von Kaenel in Zurich in Spring 2022 and *Libertie et Amour, soulignes par des Contoures* at Vollandes in Geneva in Fall 2022/Winter 2023. Both of these shows highlighted the artist's capacity to hold balance between a generosity of detail and a fleeting ambiguity. In her exhibition *Kakophonie Der Diskrepanz* at Austellungsraum Friedengasse, she continues to explore this tension through the poetics of automatism also tested by thinkers of surrealism or theosophy. It is a method of creative production that spans centuries and disciplines, into the present day, due to its ability to adapt to trendy aesthetics while maintaining a spiritual foundation.

There are five works on display; collages of aquarelle on paper. Despite Linda's limited interactions with the space before the show, the pieces formed a nearly seamless relationship with it, particularly with the red picture frames, red door frames and mirrors that created a chameleon-like effect. The space became flattened and elongated, back and forth, throwing off spatial perception like a fun house and further enhancing the encompassing quality of the install. She also placed a piece inside a doorway and another piece directly on a mirror.

As individual pieces, they invite you in. The tiny cut-out elements allude to a narrative that is never defined. It is this exhibition that Linda started to incorporate text directly into the compositions. A selection of passages weave into the works, which I see as a celebration of the influence that literature has on critical practices throughout history. But of course, it also serves to accompany the solely visual details on their quest for meaningful abstraction. By that I guess I mean abstraction as agency to push the bounds of meaning. The collages share consistency in the use of watercolor too, encouraging a gentle entrance into the fields populated by figures from vintage magazines and newspaper clippings typed in Times New Roman. This spaciousness promotes curiosity without overwhelm.

A popular culture reference that stands out to me is *The Color of Pomegranates* because of the expansive array of symbolism that viewers can chew on by contemplating the intentions of its producer. Psychoanalytic archetypes share space with subjective visions in similar ways and the colors are comparable as well. I had a chance to ask Linda some questions about the work and the following interview spotlights the literary aspect of this collection and other conceptual decisions.



Le Boulot du Balance

Runner: The name of the exhibition, *Cacophony* (a harsh mixture of sounds) of *Discrepancy* (lack of compatibility between things), indicates a focus on a sort of chaos or lack of harmony. Did this title come before the work was made and in that regard, informed the work? Or was the title inspired by the work after it was completed for the show?

Linda Voorwinde: The last piece came together only a few days before the show, and titles usually don't guide the works to an end result. Discrepancy came as a result of searching for a word that described the pulling tendencies in different directions that are happening in my mind, and consequently in the works. Cacophony really just came to me without asking for it.

There's a lot of lyrical cut up poetry in these works. Different voices, different points of view, different interests. Very schizophrenic thinking. They all portray a single person's mind, bogging. When you zoom in, you could suddenly be in a microcosm of intimate thoughts in a novel or in a manifesto like set of rules.

RM: The first piece at the top of the stairs seems like a combination of two different collages separated by a poem. What language is the text in and could you provide an English translation?

LV: I consider it as a whole piece, the part on the right actually came into being last.

"D'UNE HISTOIRE INDESIRABLE, D'UNE PUISSANCE INESTIMABLE"....From an undesirable (his)story of inestimable power

"NOUS NE RÉSOVLVONS PAS DE CES PROBLÈMES, MAIS"...
We do not solve any of these problems, but...

"LE BOULOT DU BALANCE, PAR UN MAIN-D'OEUVRE NON RÉNUMÉRÉE"...
The work of (keeping) balance, by an unpaid labor force

When I placed the big phrases next to the collage, I liked its demanding character as if we are reading a political pamphlet or a poster announcement of a book or a film, with a quote by some protagonist. *'Nous ne résolvons pas de ces problèmes, mais...'* were once the words of Christian Dotremont, one of the founders of CoBrA. He refers to the relational problems his group 'Revolutionary Surrealists' experienced with communism after WWII and the problems in their attempt of reinventing Surrealism. I agree with this phrase about the frustrating incapability of art as a solving factor, but I do not underestimate art's presence as a necessary demonstration of energy turned into love, not hate.

Throughout this piece, there are passages in tiny letters written in German used as frames to surround or separate the different parts of the piece:

Obwohl das Sujet verblüffend einfach ist, der Fassadenverputz abgebröckelt, die Cafés früh geschlossen, treffen wir hier wiederum auf eine poetische Wirklichkeit, dem Alltagsleid der gesamten Menschheit, oder – das wesentliche Geheimnis dieser Ruinen; die grossen Tragödien der menschlichen Seele. Um es deutlicher zu sagen – eine Fleischbrühe, die niemals aufhört real zu sein. Und in diese fremde Welt, losgelöst von jedem Anachronismus, offenbaren sich nicht Ritter und nicht Heilige, sonder die geistigen Köpfen der Welt die erhoben wurden von tiefe Unterschiede aber deshalb nicht weniger erfüllt von tiefe Verwandtschaft und des Dranges zur Ausserung; plastische Vision und dem Traum vollkommener Schönheit. Es ist, als besässe die freiesten Geister in der nicht freien Welt, jeder Epoche, die Macht, einzig durch die Kraft seiner Seele alles, was er berührt, die versteinerten Muscheln, der weggeworfenen Proviant, zu verändern. Und das ganze Zauber erschliesst ein Gleichgewicht zwischen Ernst und Frohsinn, zwischen Frage und Befehl! Diese Heiterkeit, ewig und ewig im Gleichgewicht mit alles schmerzenseiche. Poesie und lauter leere Worte in blumenreichen Gassen, und hinter geschlossenen Türen: Liebkosung, Vorschrift, und Verbot, geheimes Zwiegeflüster und Revolvernschossen. Die stille ist dann die knatternden blauen Flamme gewichen. Blättergewirr, halblauten Geplauder von häuslichen Décors und Mobilier. Im milden Licht das Flimmern, das Zweifellos Flimmern der Haut, von alten Teppichen und jener unbestimmbare Gestalt, die ungestört weitermurmelt.

Although the subject is astonishingly simple, the plaster on the facade crumbling, the cafés closed early, we again encounter here a poetic reality, the everyday suffering of all humanity, or - the essential secret of these ruins; the great tragedies of the human soul. To put it more clearly – a meat broth that never ceases to be real. And in this strange world, freed from every anachronism, it is not knights and not saints who reveal themselves, but rather the spiritual minds of the world who have been raised by deep differences but are therefore no less filled with deep kinship and the urge to express themselves; plastic vision and the dream of perfect beauty. It is as if the freest spirits in the non-free world, in every era, had the power to change everything they touched, the petrified shells, the discarded provisions, solely through the power of their souls. And this whole magic creates a balance between seriousness and cheerfulness, between question and command! This serenity, forever and ever in balance with everything painful. Poetry and nothing but empty words in flowery alleys and behind closed doors: caresses, instructions and prohibitions, secret whispers and revolver firing. The silence then gave way to the crackling blue flame. Tangle of leaves, hushed chatter about domestic decor and furniture. In the mild light the flickering, the undoubtedly flickering of the skin, of old carpets and some indefinable figure that continues to murmur undisturbed.

Kalkmilch und Mauerblumen roch. Kein Zweifel, ich hatte mein Ziel erreicht, Keine Kinder nur Büchern von Zeit zu Z

In der Mauer ein leerstehendes Haus öffnete sich ein Tor. Ich gelangte in einen enge, völlig dunkle ummauerten Garten in welchem es nach Kalkmilch und Mauerblumen roch. Kein Zweifel, ich hatte mein Ziel erreicht. Keine Kinder, nur Büchern von Zeit zu Zeit, sowie eine kleines Reich woher ich mich zurückziehen werde. Dann, plötzlich, erschien ein brennende Petrollampe, die erste Schatten auf mein Glück. Ich stellte mein Gepäck in eine Ecke und setzte mich auf eine ältere Mäuerchen der ja, mit der Wohnungsnot, diente als Tischen, Kleiderablage und als Bett,... da wurde ich ernst, fragte mich, ob es wahr sei, dass man in der Schweiz nicht auf die Strassen spucken dürfte, aus reiner Lust. Kaum hatte ich meine Frage Platz gemacht und noch mehr Beklemmung mischte sich in das Glücksgefühl. Ich wollte gleich einen Freund anrufen. Ich sollte eigentlich, aber ich war so verlegen, so unvorbereitet, was riskierte ich schon? Oft habe ich mir die Frage gestellt, in die Telephonkabine des Geistes; aber nur der Stadtmauer antwortet "Ihr alle seid Opfer!" – "Ach so" – Kreischend buchstabierte ich denn eine gute Stunde die Gebrauchsanweisung im Zickzack, dann leuchtete mir ein – die grossen Wahrheiten sind ja eindeutig und einfach, und das Glücksgefühl war wieder da und mächtig. Diesmal behaupteten sich Zweifel ja nur noch einen Augenblick; und als ich mich einmal vor das Fenster setzte, mit Vergnügen und als Pflicht, spuckte ich auf die schnurgeraden gottverlassenen Strasse, ohne Einschränkung und Unterbruch bis die Pfliffe des Verkehrspolizisten. Er schaute mich fragend an – "Ja", seit Jahren sagte ich – dann wies er auf die Gasse und verlangte sechzig Francs.

A gate opened in the wall of an empty house. I came to a narrow, completely dark walled garden in which it smelled of lime milk and wallflowers. No doubt, I had achieved my goal. No children, just books from time to time, and a small empire in which I will retire. Then, suddenly, a burning petrol lamp appeared, the first shadow on my happiness. I put my luggage in a corner and sat on an older wall that, with the housing shortage, served as a table, clothes rack and as a bed... then I got earnest and asked myself whether it was true that one wasn't allowed to spit on the streets, in Switzerland, out of pure desire. As soon as I posed my question, even more anxiety mixed in with the feeling of happiness. I wanted to call a friend right away. I should, but I was so embarrassed, so unprepared, what risk was I taking? I have often asked myself the question in the telephone booth of the mind; but only the city wall answers "You are all victims!" – "Oh, right" – Screeching I spelled out the instructions in zigzag for a good hour, then it dawned on me – the big truths are clear and simple, and the feeling of happiness was back and powerful. This time doubt only lasted for a moment; and when I sat down in front of the window, with pleasure and as a duty, I spat on the dead straight, godforsaken street, without restriction or interruption until the whistle of a traffic policeman. He looked at me questioningly - "Yes, for years" I said - then he pointed to the alley and demanded sixty francs.

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There is a passage in French as well:

De temps employé, de temps perdu, de temps gagné. De temps présent infatigablement réinventées, juxtaposés, par cette jeu infini, du corps et de l'esprit. Voyez comment... sans doute; elle rebelle à mourir, à disparaître, à être effacée, sous les pieds, et à se transformer sans l'abus, bon gré mal gré, de la doctrine de la haine. Surtout sous une apparence frivole, elle-même invinciblement, elle écrase les différences entre homme et femme; ce orgie de tension vivante; la confusion des langues; Et c'est par ce l'enchantement d'une plus total silence, les couleurs éclatante donné au monde s'harmonisent. Et ce secret de l'existence dévoile la temps du plus authentique.

Time spent, time lost, time saved. The present time tirelessly reinvented, juxtaposed, by this infinite play of body and mind. See how... no doubt; it rebels to die, to disappear, to be erased, under feet, and to be transformed without the abuse, willy-nilly, of the doctrine of hatred. Especially under a frivolous appearance, it itself invincibly crushes the differences between man and woman; this orgy of living tension; the confusion of languages; And it is through this enchantment of a more total silence, that the dazzling colors given to the world harmonize. And this secret of existence reveals the most authentic time.

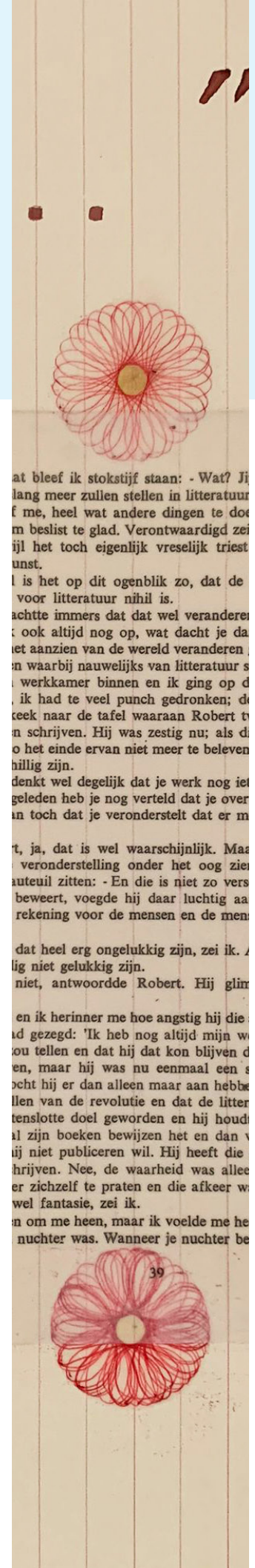
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There are also the beginning and the end of two sentences in English that I inserted as vertical pillars. They start and end a book that I've been meaning to read but never got to. It's called *The Transformative Vision – Reflections on the Nature and History of Human Expression* by José A. Argüelles. Books themselves have this ability to transform one's vision, so I wondered about the first and last sentence of this particular book because of its title. Joined in the work they now function as relational concepts encompassing all that happens in-between through the visuals and poetry.

OUR SHIMMERING blue planet, seen from afar, is bisected by two planes: the equatorial, or horizontal, plane and the vertical plane of the polar axis. The equatorial plane splits the world into two inversely symmetrical hemispheres, the Northern and Southern, capped by the two polar regions. The north polar region is essentially water, the Arctic Ocean, around which are grouped various land masses...

...a mind purified of psychic anarchy. If we carefully follow the path of consciousness, which is the same process of individuation in which everything is brought to light, the Road of Life itself, our rebirth into this new world is inevitable. To attain this rebirth only one thing is required — that we die to our frozen identities — scientist and artist alike. This is the true art, the art of transformation.

Lastly, there is a piece of text on transparent paper from a book included as a collage element. It's a Dutch translation of Simone de Beauvoir's Novel *The Mandarins*. You fall into the middle of a discussion between a married couple. She a psychiatrist, he a writer of novels and a journal editor. They argue about the necessity or abandonment of literature/art in times of war and political upheaval.





Winged Eros (back)

RM: The piece installed inside a doorway blocks the entrance between the two rooms and forces the flow of traffic through the alternate doorway. Does this piece also have poetry or writing throughout it?

LV: Every art space triggers in me the nervous urge to disrupt something. It doesn't need to have a radical result, but definitely to symbolize a deviant way of thinking. With this work I decreased the flow of movement in the space by placing it right in one of the entrances. And what first appears to be the front of the piece turns out to be the back. It has a poem on its front-side. It's there and not really there, surrounding the white part in which the flies are making out. That's what I like about all of these pieces, they seem to be purely aesthetic at first sight, but the more intimate you get with them, the more they'll tell you. I named this piece *Winged Eros*, after the essay 'Make way for Winged Eros: a letter to working youth', written by Alexandra Kollontai in 1923, in which she tackles the riddle of love and relationships under socialism.

In this piece, it says in German:

Hinweg mit diesem dreckigen Wäsche die uns verknechtet. Hinweg mit der schwere Zunge das verbotenden Gesetz, verkleidet als gutgemeinten Worten. Kein Wunder, das wir hin und her gerissen werden zwischen unsere stärksten Kräfte und neurotische Komplexen!" Überburdet wendet sie den Hals und glattet ihre armselige weisse Seidenbluse, zieht den Handschuh an und zerschlagt das Geschirr auf den alten Tisch, weil sie trotz die Bedürfnis nach Freiheit und allein sein, die Liebe nicht aufgeben kann. Sie schlug immer stärker und wilder und sang dazu, "Meine Freunde und Kameraden, der sozialen Schutz der Liebe ist da, sie allein ist bereit uns zu heilen, zu befreien von der seeleverderbenden Einseitigkeit. Traurig klagt der Patriat, wenn wir nicht separat hypnotisiert durch den Garten der Herrlichkeiten rennen. Wann massloser Hunger für geliebt werden nur noch verlangt wird mit aufgepeitschten Nerven, lass mich dann nicht mitten in den Glasscherben sterben, aber am liebsten in einer abgelegten Wald, eines Abends in der Dämmerung, kinderlos, auf den Blutigen Erde...

"Away with this dirty laundry that enslaves us. Away with the heavy tongue of the prohibitive law, disguised as well-intentioned words. No wonder we are torn between our strongest strengths and neurotic complexes!" Overburdened, she turns her neck and straightens her poor white silk blouse, puts on her glove and smashes the dishes on the old table, because despite the need for freedom and being alone, she cannot give up on love. She beats ever stronger and wilder and sang, "My friends and comrades, the social protection of love is there, it alone is ready to heal us, to free us from the soul-destroying one-sidedness. The patriate laments sadly when we do not run separately hypnotized through the garden of glories. "When excessive hunger for being loved is only required still with whipped nerves, then let me not die in the middle of the broken glass, but preferably in a remote forest, one evening at dusk, childless, on the Bloody Earth..."

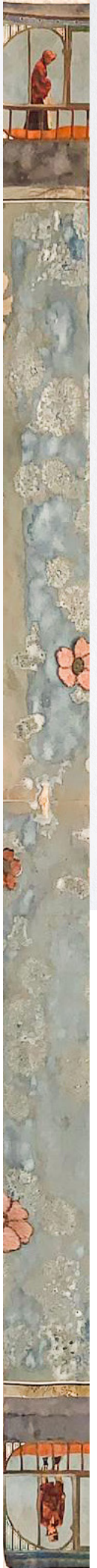
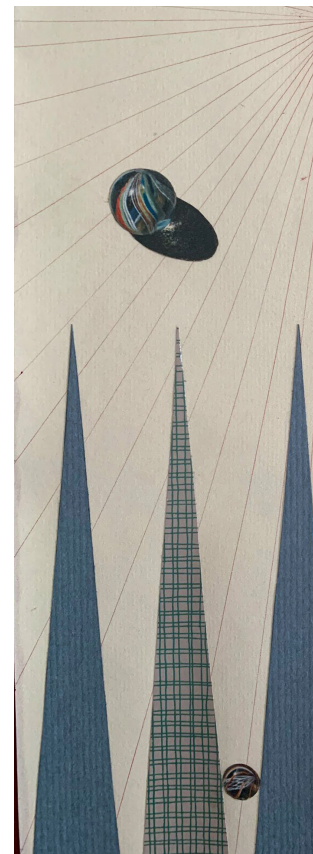


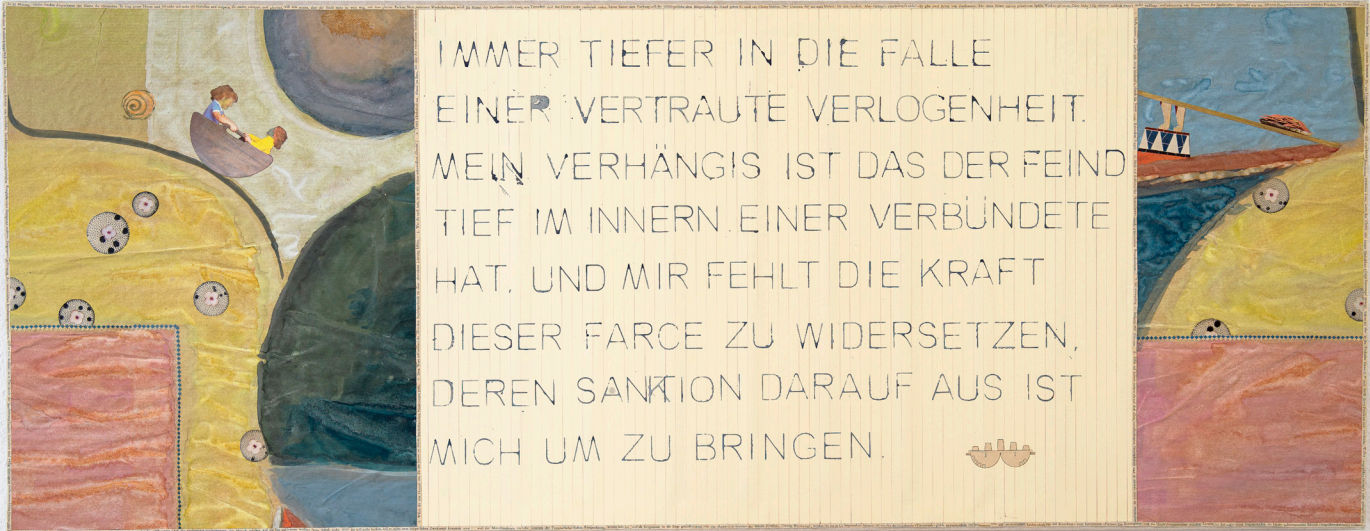
Glück und Leid des Dienens

RM: The piece installed on a mirror resembles a Backgammon board game. The frame of that piece is red and the mirror reflects the opening in the wall which also has a red frame.

LV: I didn't plan that. The red frame came as a solution for a material clash I felt necessary. I had this red shining plastic foil laying around that I found in the basement of a building once. But I never underestimate the gravity of intuitive choices, I've visited Friedensgasse before, so who knows what my mind nestled in the unconscious. We were pretty stunned with the outcome as well.

There is a couple in this work that are actually actors on a film set of some costume drama. No idea which film. The woman was standing next to the man, shorter, bending her head down, under his reign. It felt good to separate them and place her far above him, now looking down on him, and he now turned upside down, If you'd twist the work 90 degrees, they'd be sharing even ground and in the middle a tiny pair of hands shaking.





RM: There is another piece that includes text, similar to the first piece at the top of the stairs...

LV: Yes, the main large text here is written in German. I am addicted to finding my doubts and thoughts confirmed through the words of others. That's why I love to turn to (female) writers. I come home in their essays and novels. Sometimes there are sentences that reflect so thrillingly accurate my experience of being, even if they might've meant something entirely different. Like the large sentence in this piece is the outcome of a very personal extraction of a few sentences on a page in Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Inseparables*. I named this piece *L'inséparable*, but as she refers to her closest childhood friend, I refer to the inseparable connection between an angel and the devil within a human being.



L'inséparable

Immer tiefer in die Falle einer vertraute Verlogenheit. Mein Verhängnis ist das der Feind tief im Innern einen Verbündeten hat, und mir fehlt die Kraft dieser Farce zu widersetzen, deren Sanktion darauf auf ist mich um zu bringen.

Deeper and deeper into the trap of a familiar mendacity. My fate is that the enemy has an ally deep within, and I lack the strength to counteract this farce, the sanction of which is to kill me.

All throughout the piece in German:

Es ist Montag; wieder feuchte Auge hinter der Maske des Idiotischen. Er trug graue Hosen und tat nicht viel mehr als hinfallen und stolpern. Er seufzt, schleppt, und schwitzt, will sich setzen aber der Stuhl steht zu weit weg, auf dem glatten Parkett. Nach mehreren Wiederholungen wird die Menge der Zuschauer nicht riesig sein. Trotzdem darf der Clown nicht realistisch reden. Schon hinter dem Vorhang soll das Unbürgerliche dem Bürgerlichen die Hand geben. Er muss ein Clown bleiben, der Urclown, der niemals Mitleid für sich fordert. Aber gelingt's oder gelingt's nicht? " Es gibt zwei Arten von Zuschauern: die einen lieben naiven primitiven Spässe. Wird er gefressen oder nicht? Sie schreien neidisch wenn's nicht misslingt, und schnattern wie Enten wenn der Spassmacherquietscht wie ein Schwein. Das geschnatters einen sozialen Rivalen, der Dummheit ein unartikulierte Sprache... Die anderen kommen für ein Unaussterbbares Beweis – dass eine kleine Revolution entstehen kann, wenn der Clown mit kluger Einfachheit gültige Kunstregel sprengt. Stürzt er aber in die Kaskaden hin wird er auch durch dieses Publikum mit psychische Waffen ausgepiffen. Gelingt's oder gelingt's nicht.

It's Monday; wet eyes again behind the mask of idiotism. He wore gray pants and did little more than fall and stumble. He sighs, drags and sweats, wants to sit down but the chair is too far away on the slippery parquet floor. After several repetitions, the crowd of spectators will not be huge. Nevertheless, the clown is not allowed to speak realistically. Even behind the curtain, the uncivilized should shake hands with the civilized. He must remain a clown, the original clown who never demands pity for himself. Will it pull through or will it not pull through? "There are two types of spectators: those who love naive, primitive fun. Will he be eaten or not? They scream in envy when he doesn't fail, and quack like ducks when the clown squeals like a pig. The chatter is a social rival, the stupidity of an inarticulate speech ... The others come for an inextinguishable proof - that a small revolution can arise if the clown breaks valid art rules with clever simplicity. But if he falls into the cascades, he will also be whistled by this audience with psychological weapons. Will it pull through or will it not pull through?

Innerhalb einer Raubtiergruppe muss ein Mensch aus seiner Kreatur von herrlicher Zerschlamtheit, mannigfaltig den Ranghöhe eines Dompteur erobern. Eingesperrt im Grenzen das menschlichen Berechnungsvermögens, soll er nur denkbar als a-Tier durch der Ausatmung von fossilen Gedanken und völlig überlegene aussermenschliche Gesten, ein Imponiergehaben darstellen, wodurch das Motiv zum Angriff wegfällt. Es ist übrigens falsch zu behaupten, dass die vierbeinigen Erscheinungen, der Mensch anfallen weil sie ihn auf-fressen wollen; Nein jedoch nicht. Aber das will nicht heissen, das es nicht zum körperlichen Zweikampf kommen wird... weil der Mensch indessen nach die Gesetzes der Tiergesellschaftlichen Rangordnung, vertierlicht ist, und als Artgenosse in die Enge getrieben wird von das "Raum-Zeit-System" der soziale Rivalität. Diese Wettkampf, welches für das Gefangenschaft lebende, sowie für das freilebende "Tiernensch" gleich unvermeidlich ist, ist besessen von tief verwurzelten Leidenschaft für das Einnehmen eines bestimmten "Platzes". Die Konsequenz von der Angleichungstendenz sozialen Rivalen ist das sogar toten Gegenständen die Macht bekommen eine Schreck/Angriiffsreaktion auszulösen.



Within a group of predators, a person has to conquer the rank of tamer out of his creation of wonderfully distorted sloppiness. Imprisoned within the limits of the human ability to calculate, it is only conceivable as an a-animal, that is supposed to display an impressive demeanor through the exhalation of fossilized thoughts and completely superior non-human gestures, to eliminate the motive for attack. By the way, it is wrong to claim that the four-legged phenomena attack humans because they want to eat them; No, that not. But that doesn't mean that there won't be physical duels... because the human is now animalized, according to the laws of animal social hierarchy, and as a fellow species, is now driven into a corner by the social "space-time system". Rivalry. This competition, which is unavoidable for both the captive and the free-living "animal man," is obsessed with deep-rooted passion for occupying a particular "place." The consequence of the tendency of social rivals to align, is that even dead objects gain the power to trigger a fright/attack reaction.

- 1. Wähle dir jene Humor aus, die am besten zu deinen psychologischen Niederungen passt.*
- 2. Dein Wort soll immer das abstrakte Begleitgeräusch zu einer abstrakten Leistung bilden.*
- 3. Was du auch tust, tu es mit deiner unbewussten 'Gluscht'!*
- 4. Trink alkoholisch am Abend im Bett, aus eine Art versoffenen Seelenfriedens.*
- 5. Hoffe immer, das Liebe sich innig blossstellt, durch die Kunst vom kritischen Fragen.*
- 6. Mach viel Reklam für Naturalismus durch symbolischen Provokationen.*
- 7. Sei zwiespältig – Stolpern mit Präzision.*
- 8. Zähle auf keinen andern als auf dich allein, sozialbedingten Streitigkeiten sind ja niemals ganz zu vermeiden.*

- 1. Choose the humor that best suits your psychological lows.*
- 2. Your word should always form the abstract accompanying noise to an abstract performance.*
- 3. Whatever you do, do it with your unconscious 'gluscht' (an almost addictive desire)!*
- 4. Drink alcohol in bed in the evening for a kind of drunken peace of mind.*
- 5. Always hope that love reveals itself intimately through the art of critical questioning.*
- 6. Promote naturalism through symbolic provocations.*
- 7. Be ambivalent – stumble with precision.*
- 8. Don't count on anyone other than yourself; socially-related disputes can never be completely avoided.*



REGRET IS A WEAPON, POINTED AT OUR BELLIES...



LV: There is a poem in *Bauchgefühl*, written in German:

Wer handhabt die Peitsche, wessen Signal ihr den Schlaf verkürzt? Wem gehört die Riten, die sich wie eine Riesenschlange zweimal um ihren Hals und ihr Bauch rollt, weil sie immer noch flach und faltenlos ist? Wer ist dieser Mann der am Sonntags kommt, um das Fleisch zu Schneiden? Was wäre sie für ein treues Hundeli geworden, wenn er sie recht behandelt hätte! Erst hat sie Arme hängen lassen... "Ist sie gemalt?" Nein, sie ist nicht gemalt, sie hat sich bewegt. Und jede Bewegung hat Freskostil. Jetzt hebt sie ihre Arme, sie streckt sie aus: Ihr Körper steigt senkrecht in die Höhe und sie entfliegt der trübselige Pflichtenbrei zu der sie verdammt ist! Sie wiegt ihre Hüften, frei von der neun Monate-Fleischeslast, jongliert sie das Ei auf eine Fingerspitze.

Who handles the whip, whose signal shortens her sleep? Who owns the rites that curl twice around her neck and belly like a giant snake because it's still flat and unwrinkled? Who is that man who comes on Sunday to cut the meat? What a loyal dog she would have been if he had treated her right! First she let her arms hang down... "Is she painted?" No, she's not painted, she moved herself. And every movement has fresco style. Now she raises her arms, she stretches them out: her body rises vertically and she escapes from the dreary mush of duties to which she is condemned! Rocking her hips, free from nine months of meat burden, she juggles the egg on one fingertip.



RM: You have previously talked before about incorporating the format of the storybook into your work as your collages are illustrative and seem to be narrative. The inclusion of text in these works seem to be the realization of that thought process. Were you inspired by other artists or storytellers in your decision to format these works like pages from a story?

LV: After several people mentioning their nostalgia for children's books when seeing my earlier collages and an offer to design one, I've actually started to collect old secondhand children's books. Fairy tale illustrations in particular like Rie Cramer or Anton Pieck's. The idea of illustrating one myself seemed like a turn I could take with my work, but then I eventually stepped away from it, I don't want to feel limited by frameworks. But poetry has always found its way into my work, usually after a work is done. I wanted to integrate it in the work itself for a long time but the figurative weight in my work was too dense for it. With an increasing interest into plain essences of shapes and colors there was a door opened for text.

The bigger bold phrases in two of the works started out as big sheets of paper that I used to deblock. I started dipping letter stamps in ink and pressing them onto paper with great frustration because I'd feel stoic in my studio due to tormenting mental occupations. I thought if these thoughts prohibit me, then let's take them as the subject. I think it's great therapy, cause the concentration of stamping needs all my attention and there's no more space left for depression or self-doubt. Plus seeing the issues that bug me materialize on the paper in front of me destroys their destructive power. Out of the mind expelled by the body. So I already had a stack of these pages laying around and I felt the new collage paintings I was doing were missing its counterpart, so I joined both elements and it just made immediate sense.

RM: It seems like the writing intertwined amongst the visual elements of the work has become an essential element in this exhibition. How would you describe the relationship between all of the passages you chose and included from one piece to the next?

LV: In some pieces, we can read more observatory descriptions of a female character acting within the limits of her psychological and physical surroundings. Other times, we read intimate testimonies or poetry directly from her own lips, or we just read the things she reads.



*Kakophonie
Der
Diskrepanz,*
was on view until
October 15, 2023

Winged Eros (front)