

MISS DMZ

26.1. – 2.3.2024

YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES

KRONE COURONNE is happy to present a video work by Seoul-based collective YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES (YHCHI), consisting of South Korean artist Young-Hae Chang and North American artist Marc Voge. YHCHI is a pioneering net art project, established at the onset of the internet era, which allowed artists to exhibit their work without the endorsement of an institution. Then, as now, net art transcended geographical and cultural boundaries, while also challenging prejudice and aesthetic conformity within the art world.

The work of YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES took the early internet as a productive medium for a more expansive practice and explores a wide range of social and political issues, from the excess and futility of the art world to the dangers of climate change. Through an emblematic fast-paced text-based language, their signature *flash*-animation form hasn't varied much since their formation in 1999. In a practice parallel to concrete poetry, the text-driven narratives are flashed sentence by sentence over a coloured backdrop, oftentimes set to self-composed jazz soundtracks, harnessing the jazz aesthetic. Drawing comparisons to propaganda and advertising strategies, YHCHI ventures into an ethical limn between representation and oppression, truth and fiction in the digital era.

The video work MISS DMZ, translated and adapted for the presentation in KRONE COURONNE, tells a story of doors and tunnels, martinis and casino chips, addressing the political reality of the DMZ – the demilitarized zone dividing North and South Korea, established in 1953 after the Korean war.

Vernissage
Fr, 26.1.2024, 18:00
21:30 Dj set Maestrotchang

Game Night
Sa, 2.3.2024
with Mahmoud Khattab

Opening hours
Thu-Fr, 15:00 - 18:00
Sa, 11:00 - 18:00

The exhibitions are supported by:
City of Biel/Bienne, Canton Bern, Pro Helvetia,
Gubler-Hablützel Stiftung, Susanne und Martin
Knechtli-Kradolfer Stiftung

PINK HAWK DOWN

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Felix Stöckle

In the front garden, at the gateway to the perfect world, they welcome us: the garden gnomes. The deliberate placement of such figures has a long tradition. Gnomes and similar little helpers were already believed to have access to magical powers in ancient times. Towards the end of the 18th century, they finally experienced their heyday with the onset of the fairy tale craze - think Snow White or Rumpelstiltskin. Today, the mass-produced, colourful decorative figures often appear to be a symbol of petty bourgeois industriousness, frivolous, embarrassing and pure kitsch. But what we describe as kitsch is always subject to codification - kitsch can be enchanting, parodic or corrosive.

The watercolour drawing on handmade paper also plays with this. It only appears cute in the first instance. By looking inside the garden gnome, it reveals its abysmal nature: filled with nails, screws or scrap metal and fitted with an explosive device, the sculpture soon mutates into a dangerous bomb. A motion detector, a timer, a phone call or a taut cord - they can all be triggers for an explosion with serious consequences. Consequently, there may be thoughts of psychological warfare behind the petrified smile.

This is how Felix Stöckle welcomes us into his front garden. In his solo exhibition "Pink Hawk Down", however, this does not lead us into a perfect world, but rather into a world full of ambivalence.

Stöckle found the instructions for the garden gnome bomb on internet forums where people discuss conspiracy theories or the end of the world. Such research is an important part of his artistic work, and Stöckle is just as interested in historical objects as he is in their pop-cultural appropriation or in what private individuals offer on online sales platforms. Stöckle collects what has already been used in order to transform it in a second step into his own language of form and colour. This can be seen in the exhibition title, among other things.



On 3 October 1993, a US military operation began in Somalia, which came to a bloody end shortly afterwards. In 2002, the warlike confrontation was recounted as a heroic story in the Hollywood film "Black Hawk Down". Black Hawk is also the name of a medium-weight helicopter transport with a high level of resilience, making it a valuable war vehicle.

Hollywood is certainly considered a suitable place to bring great American narratives to a broad audience. The industry is dedicated to fantasies, ideologies and fears and at the same time clearly states who the good guys (American soldiers) and who the bad guys (enemies/terrorists) are. With the title "Pink Hawk Down", Stöckle draws on the aforementioned Hollywood film to break down this dichotomy, piece by piece, through the deliberate use of the colour pink. Searching for lightness in the heavy, the colour symbolises for the artist a remaining hope and thus an escape from the feeling of powerlessness that creeps in at the sight of current world events.

Pink is able to strip objects of their brutality, because pink is tender and friendly. When pink ribbons lace a rifle hanging above the door, the weapon with the inscription "Salü <3 <3 <3" does appear inviting. Together with the glass coat of arms in front of the window, the "wall decoration" further evokes a pub setting, a social gathering as well as a *Stammtisch* (regulars' table) culture with a potentially close-minded character.

In contrast, the two anodised aluminium plates with a pink background seem to open up the horizon and lead us into a world full of symbolically charged motifs: here, day and night merge under a passionately burning heart. While the lobster on the carpet appears majestic, in real life the animal is often subjected to an agonising killing as a delicacy. Holding the bird towards the sky, a kind of sacrificial offering is made and while individual rays of sunlight almost touch the ground, a helicopter flies dangerously close to it, like the myth of Icarus. There are certainly other or contradictory references to be found.

The artist is not interested in telling a particular story. Rather, through the anachronistic composition of the motifs, Stöckle creates a whole range of possible correlations that completely elude a tangible categorisation of good and evil. In keeping with this and in contrast to Hollywood films, the helicopters in "Pink Hawk Down" become friendly and nice.

One of these is already looking benevolently at us, hovering in the centre of the room. Hanging from four tension cables, it may remind us of a REGA mission. With the painted smile, Stöckle draws on the so-called "nose art" - the painting of aircraft objects that is particularly common on military flights. With the slogan BE A GOOD HELICOPTER, SAVE LIVES, Stöckle's exhibition follows however a different credo.

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While the magazine "Die Schweizer Illustrierte" regularly reports on people, fashion and beauty, the Swiss magazine "Schweizer Waffen" offers firearms enthusiasts an insight into the latest trends and flops. In 1986, the editor in chief expressed his disappointment with the new Colt Mustang 280 pistol, which was no untypical example of how obsolete America's firearms industry was at the time: "We cannot make a state with weapons from the 19th century or early 20th century that are really outdated." (December 1986, issue 43). Reading such words may be outrageous. But as I hold the magazine in my hands, the cover is missing. Stöckle had previously removed it, torn it into small pieces and created recycled paper from it. Despite the particles, which may refer back to the cover of the weapons magazine, it primarily shows an empty surface. In this deconstruction, the artist creates space for something new. For a poem? A love letter?

They hang as framed pictures over a candyfloss-coloured chequered pattern. This type of pattern is also ambiguous: while it appears petty bourgeois on tablecloths or picnic blankets, a scarf with chequered tassels can also be an expression of resistance and rebellion. And so the painted wall seems to meander between small and large chequered patterns.

Another magazine finally served as the basis for the artist's ceramic work: a 1942 issue of Globi, inspired by the printed results of a competition in which children creatively explored the theme of "war and peace". The main prize was won by 13-year-old Reinhard, whose sculptural depiction shows two war opponents reaching out their hands for reconciliation over the cannon. However, the expressive image stands in stark contrast to the fragile material of the wall object, which threatens to shatter into a thousand pieces with one wrong move. And so I stand in the middle of this world dipped in pink and ask myself why it takes this childlike gaze to finally bring a sense of peace.

- Katrin Sperry

Co-founder of Turbo Press silkscreen studio in Biel/Bienne, Felix Stöckle (*1994, St. Gallen, lives and works in Biel/Bienne) is also an artist. Graduating with a BA from the Lucerne University of the Arts (HSLU) in 2021, Stöckle is interested in traditions, customs, rituals and their transmission. His artistic interest in artefacts finds expression in experimentation with a variety of craft techniques and materials, referring to cultural identity and its global appropriation. Mythological themes, legends of gods and heroes, ancient ornaments, religious, ecclesiastical and political figures, machines and equipment of war, as well as comic book culture and digital communication are at the heart of his work. Celtic symbols, weapons, pistols and assault rifles, tanks and bombers, as well as cartoons and emojis, are all cited subjects in his work. The material used are diverse: wood, glass, ceramics and textiles. Felix Stöckle is interested in social, cultural and political mechanisms and their changes, dynamics and interactions. He creates works of art in which the underlying narratives are translated into images or sequences of images that are deliberately simple and raw. They symbolise the fragility of an unstable world and the vulnerability of human relationships. Concise and with a sharp-tongued undertone, his images and depictions are both powerful and effective in their expression. (Text: Nadia Veronese)

Danke & Merci & BaciBaciBaci:
 Katrin Sperry
 Leolie Greet
 Sophie Benvenuti
 Linus Baumeler
 Pablo Stettler
 Dino Gärbi Breihaus
 Kri&Camille



FRONT ROOM

1. Felix Stöckle
HOW TO, 2024
Watercolour on paper, oak frame
2. Felix Stöckle
Gnom No.1, Gnom No.2, Gnom No.3, 2024
Ceramics
3. Felix Stöckle
Salü <3<3<3, 2024
Engraving on wooden gun
4. Felix Stöckle
Verre Innocent, 2024
Engraved glass
5. Felix Stöckle
Vole mon oiseau vole et l'care, 2024
Anodised aluminium engraved
6. Felix Stöckle
Der grosse Tanz und ein Flusskrebs, 2024
Anodised aluminium engraved
7. Felix Stöckle
Mon amour l'hélicoptère, 2024
Wax mixing technique

8. Felix Stöckle
Rosinenbomber, 2024
Anodised aluminium engraved
9. Felix Stöckle
New Page No1, No2, No3, 2024
Recycled Schweizer Waffen-Magazin
10. Felix Stöckle
GLOBI MAGAZIN 1943, 2024
Cooked ceramics
11. Felix Stöckle
Karo No5, 2024
Etching and engraving on copper

BACK ROOM

12. YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES PRESENTS
MISS DMZ (Version française), 2024
MISS DMZ (German Version), 2024
Original text and music soundtrack, 13:48
HD video, flexible dimensions

