

PARADISIAC

12. - 26.11.2022

Saturday & Sunday 12-18:00 and by appointment

Raum MG-16
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ULU BRAUN / CRISTIANA COTT NEGOESCU / INMA FEMENÍA / IRATI INORIZA / DENNIS KAUZNER
/ MEVLANA LIPP / HELENA MÜNCH / FABIAN RAMÍREZ / MORITZ RIESENBECK

An environment that is changing ever faster due to construction and progressive destruction raises questions about the state of nature and our relationship to it.

Does increasing alienation boost the need to romanticise yesterday? Not only trends such as the idealisation of country life and the new enthusiasm for hiking are read as signs of a return to the past.

However, the gaze seems to be less melancholically entrenched in the past and more forward-looking, accepting change and rediscovering neo-romantic aspects such as light, clouds, weather and their effect on landscape, nature and the individual himself. The concept of paradise in the here and now.

Is it a realistic concept of paradise that takes into account the development of forests, landscapes and also the seemingly irreversible destruction of evolved ecosystems? Forests that are acutely endangered by increasingly long periods of drought could be revitalized and preserved by reforestation with less water-consuming tree species. Man finds himself again in his favorite role - that of the destroyer, or expressed somewhat more optimistically, that of the creator. This tension, as ambivalent as it seems, produces reactions: political, social and artistic reactions. Quiet to powerful statements, an examination of the 'status quo' of the state of nature. Attentively observed developments culminate in hope or also in the 'worst case' scenario, in the assumption of a 'paradise lost'.

PARADISIAC shows a subjectively selected range of these reactions with nine international positions.

A big scale format by Dennis Kauzner opens the show, contributing a classical-painterly position. In his dark painting two souls beat in one breast. To speak superficially of a lost paradise, however, would be a premature conclusion. Although Kauzner's depictions do not deny the threat posed by man-made changes such as sprawling architecture, he contrasts this danger with deliberately bright, warm colors and soft painterly gestures that bring the forces between nature and mechanized change by man into a new balance. Both nature and, in a broader sense, the depicted landscape are given a special, resistant presence in this way.

From here, the exhibition space finally opens up to a floating, volatile work by Valencian sculptor and installation artist Inma Femenía. Femenía, who works at the interface between digitalization and light, creates with "Plummet" a chimera, a plumb line between the lightness and sublime beauty of the light-absorbing and, as it were, radiant color gradients of a rainbow and the associations in terms of content that the material, PVC, implies under environmental aspects. An abstracted 'landscape', a nucleus of both worlds that implies everything.

Helena Münch's large abstraction to the opposite side of "Plummet" makes one think of a lake landscape, a floodplain, the Amazonas delta - the associations could not be more diverse. Münch 'paints' with stain. Her works are all landscapes that penetrate into the dreamy, into the subconscious and thus perhaps come closest to the above-mentioned romantic aspects of landscape.

Irati Inoriza's sculptures and paintings, executed in different shades of green, are quite different - are they hermaphrodites, organisms between plant and animal? They successfully

elude any classification. For Inoriza, they are born from the sea and connect the unknown with the inexplicable. They are nature 2.0 - created with materials from 3D printers or traditionally in ceramics - the transformation of her version of landscape and life has already begun inexorably.

Mevlana Lipp turns to another page of the same book: Lipp's 'paintings', created with wood, velvet and spray paint, seem to contain a subtle mystery. The liveliness of his interpretation of nature seems visionary. His landscapes harbor diverse organisms rather than pure plants. His creatures are as ornamental as they are clearly structured, appearing disturbing and at the same time beguilingly beautiful - the seductive version of a modern concept of paradise. The young Mexican **Fabian Ramírez** often transforms his abstract paintings into colorful pictorial worlds as a sign of his attachment to the originality of his own experience of nature. These paintings, which he has recently begun to execute on wood as well, resemble landscapes that spread inexorably before the eye in the wake of light and its energy. For PARADISIAC he deviates from this concept for the first time. His exhibited works are counter-designs to the perfection of flowing form and color. Ramírez shows burnt-out relics of once flourishing nature - a contrast to our wishful thinking of nature that could not be stronger and has a lasting effect.

On the window side of the show, **Cristiana Cott Negoescu's** installation 'Causal Nexus' brutally demonstrates the consequence of the ongoing destruction of our living space and the deformation of entire landscapes. A grinding machine provides the appropriate sound for this gruelling destruction. It is physically painful to witness the process of ablation. Both acoustically and visually - the gaze can hardly be averted - realities are created here by proxy. Cott Negoescu consistently relies on strong images in her work - her installations and performances have an intense physical presence and are not exclusively here about the change in our living environment.

Moritz Riesenbeck, like Cott Negoescu one of this year's outstanding graduates of the Düsseldorf Art Academy, takes a stance that sets himself apart from the other positions in the show. His cinematic actor does not seem to be looking for answers or solutions to the pressing questions. His landscape is barren, parched, no hint of romance, let alone paradise. His protagonist, or rather he himself, walks through this desert like a driven man. There is only perseverance, but no escape - a gloomy vision or a pointer to the strength to endure everything and thus still have a future?

Future, past, romanticisation, transfiguration, and nature kitsch/clichés: a video collage by **Ulu Braun** concludes the subjective survey of PARADISIAC: Ulu Braun is a master of confusion and uncertainty. In "Forst", his multiple award-winning film (e.g. "German Short Film Award") about several groups of people searching their way through an imaginary forest, he leads the viewer into traps laid everywhere and skilfully questions our relationship to nature, which in his case ultimately ends up in an artificial "nature experience park".

What irony and demystification of the romantic image of nature and yet perhaps a unifying element of all the works in the show: whether Braun, Cott Negoescu, Femenía, Inoriza, Kautzner, Lipp, Münch, Ramírez or Riesenbeck - nothing is as it seems.

Markus Kersting