

*Someplace Special*

3 February – 17 March 2018

Two women sit across from each other. It's summer. A beer fizzes when opened.

One of the women gets up, bangs her hand on the table and yells, "It is time again!" A lighter slides off the edge of the table. The other woman nervously looks for a cigarette and mumbles, "Right... We gotta plan our January show!" Her eyes light up. She takes a puff. And another. And another one. "Where would you go, if you could leave tomorrow and what would you bring back from the places you've been to?"

*Someplace Special* brings together paintings by Tamina Amadyar, Max Brand, Leon Eisermann, Octavio Garabello, Jonas Lipps, and Davide Zucco, sculptural works by Hanna-Maria Hammari and José Montealegre, and a text performed by Lisa Holzer.

The title of the show comes from Leon Eisermann's edition scarf for the Gallery Merch site of Gillmeier Rech. *Someplace Special* evokes a melancholic nostalgia, as most of Eisermann's works do – but the topic displacement is here strictly bound with the promise of an exceptional and uncommon status. The title, thus, resonates with the other works in the show.

Tamina Amadyar abstracts architectural interiors and exteriors until only blurred and indistinct fields of color are left on the canvas. Her paintings reflect everyday scenes such as a bedroom, an atelier, a living room, a park etc., and for this show a train station in the north of Berlin. Max Brand creates a site-specific wall drawing, where he blows up a childlike doodle that's turned into uncountable numbers of overlapping frames from fairytales unknown. Along and within those lines of chalk, he invites you to drift off with him in large-scale scribblish worlds. Leon Eisermann's work "Tales of an Ibis bathtub" is a portrait of a loner crack addict, hunched against a rough brick wall somewhere, perhaps at the back of a building. Eisermann turns the glass-pipe protagonist into the vanitas idea of *homo bulla est*. He is both consumer and drug, and the dense smoke clouds that evaporate from his body nearly cover up the faraway crescent moon above. The tension of a comic-like style that depicts sadness and the feeling of loneliness in the city is something that reoccurs in Eisermann's practice. Octavio Garabello's practice is mostly linked to the Berlin district where he lives and works, Neukölln, from where most of his visual suggestions derive – these he firstly records in a sketchbook and later turns into large-scale paintings, slightly reminiscent of the Impressionist manner. Jonas Lipps' small watercolors function as eye openers for a perhaps alternate reality. They feed you with narratives that seem oh-so-familiar, yet you can't pin down exactly anymore when or where that was. Davide Zucco's works create new spatial zones, where different universes collapse one into the other – his works, which combine the bidimensionality on the canvas with the tridimensionality of assemblage, form a bridge to the sculptural interventions exhibited in the show by Hammari and Montealegre. Hanna-Maria Hammari's wolves sleep and remember a place distant, cold and far away. They seem peaceful, they are resting; or maybe guarding the works in the room? Who knows. Their presence evokes the cold north and impending danger, they seem quiet and calm but they remind us of the unpredictability of nature. They're threatening, as they have no faces and on closer inspection look just like limp pieces of fur and flesh. Hammari's work often plays with the uncanny; what initially seems "cute" is actually on second glance "scary" and/or "odd."

José Montealegre's miniature skeletons came back from the kingdom of the dead to say "hi." Sitting and lounging on stacks of flesh-colored tiles on the ground, they turn everyone else in the room into hungry giants. In contrast to Hammari's faceless beasts, they grin back at us. What do they know that we don't? Death may seem scary but it's not, it's a memento mori to life. It is this juxtaposition between Hammari and Montealegre that we were interested in showcasing. The paintings and their selected subjects weave together a distinct and loose cartography.

Lisa Holzer's performance accompanies the opening with her reading of a text. It is an updated version of her "Drives drive" from 2014. The sound of her voice reading carries us to someplace special. The artist's work focuses on transforming and exploring primitive drives through the medium of photography and writing. Holzer assumes that it is those human drives that make us realize things about ourselves and the world we move in.

*Someplace Special* is our fifth group show and the third curated by the gallery.