

*Kosmische Erziehung*

Lukas Goersmeyer, David Sanchez Orta

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A lot of art that aspires to be formally critical like the anti-gestural or anti-stylistic trends in post-painting and post-sculptural practices draw all their vitality from a long sense dead boogiemans (the myths of originality, medium-specificity, the supremacy of painting, the authority of the singular author, distinctions between form and content, etc.) the same way certain identitarian political struggles can, and must, keep alive the original image of the thing they're fighting against, even as it changes, and in so doing become not just ineffective but reactionary and regressive.

The works Lukas and David made for this show are eccentric. I need to be specific, because there are eccentrics and there are eccentrics. The first is a person driven by inner compulsions and they are often difficult to be around because the rules they are forced from within to follow are opaque, even to themselves. The others are zany people who dress colorfully and have quirks they invented for themselves to stand out, and these people are compelled, too, but their compulsion comes from the outside, namely their calculations about the opinions of others, not from some mercurial inner tick. It's not always clear how to distinguish the two without overstepping your right to discern and becoming an authoritarian, without thinking you yourself are the only one who can adequately say what is and isn't authentic. Setting aside this sloppy metaphor that's mixed up eccentric people with eccentric works of art: I mean to say that art works are the sensual embodiment and expression of our inner lives, and they have meaning in so far as they succeed or fail to be true to themselves. And we can learn something about the process of self-understanding when we ask ourselves if the work is true to itself, if it succeeds in accomplishing that which it sets out to do, if the task it sets itself an easy one or if it finds a cheap solution to a more difficult one, if it is disingenuous, if it is avoidant or self-indulgent, etc. It is very humiliating to assess things, realize you were quick to judge them or that their criteria were somehow different from yours, then think yourself stronger for having gone through this humbling experience, only for it to happen over and over again for the rest of your life.

Yvo recounted to me an anecdote about Lukas watching a movie with his family one evening and drawing a poster for the film while they watched it together. This seemed to condense a few things about the way his work is made. Firstly, it's usually conditioned by some pleasant state of distraction that allows him to play and for unconscious impulses to come out (I think he feels most himself when he is not fully in control), and they're made quite quickly. The works tend towards the commemorative but are not nostalgic. They have a bit of a post-punk collage ethos but are not really post-angry or counter-cultural. The work proves challenging to take in because of the variation in styles, techniques, and materials, and on account of the variation in their styles, techniques, and materials not being the content of the work itself. Each collage is both singular and exemplary. Lukas told me he'll find an old work he made and experience a kind of elation upon not being able to recognize himself having made it. David's work I don't know as well, but the drawings he's shown have an earnestness about them. They tow a line between vulnerable without crossing into the confessional. They're emotional without ironically posturing, and despite being raw and expressive they're not celebrating the rawness of expression either.

Here's a quote from a book I read about an eccentric Japanese director and how he and his co-writer solved problems: "If we didn't agree we would sometimes scarcely speak to each other for two or three days in a row except for remarks like, 'Well, the birch leaves have finally started to fall,' or, 'Last night there was a bird singing down in the valley.'" A very eccentric and very Japanese way of dealing with conflict. And yet they both seemed to give one another space to regroup, hold things open in the belief of a good idea to come that would set the world right again.