

Die 3,14159te Generation, who grew up with numbers in the air. When Soutine painted his friends, he dressed them up as workers, he couldn't help himself and they looked less human than the steaks and the fish. When Lucian Freud painted self-portraits, he would start from the eyes and work outward, migraines start in the eyes, often the left, and spiral through the cortex. The foreshortening in Carla's paintings, produce a figuration of 'real' painting, an image un-mediated by photographic assistance. In this way they escape their referent, and her painterly ability is set loose, un-paroled, viral and infecting the bodies, their bedrooms, the space, their insubordination. That is to say, these paintings, like history itself, are a crime, evidence that litigates against the present.

Five girls in a space, self-portraits, painted from reflections in a series of cheap mirrors, each broken in some circumstance to then be replaced by another, found in the street, bought second hand online or borrowed from friends. Damaged, illusions, these figures are organised on fields of blue, halo's that were frottaged against the fences near various studios. Some protected the abandoned buildings of Alt-Hohenschönhausen, a Berlin suburb known for being the current residence of former Wall guards. The others near a studio sublet in Mitte, surrounded by upscale cafes, whose staff were being fired in earshot of the painting, un-necessary, surplus, you slept too long, you didn't wake up in time.

The portraits are all detectives. Modernism started with the detective story, when Baudelaire translated Poe's The Mystery of Marie Roger, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, and The Purloined Letter. He also used to take sandpaper to his clothes, it's obvious to say he was the first of us, but it doesn't make it wrong. And clothes are important here, now more than ever. The increasing specialisation of 'sub-cultural' categories allows for a highly liquid market and abundant marketing opportunities, a Dark Academicism. The linen that Carla chose has a weave that stands prominently against the brush, primed with glue, a thin translucent, clogged up layer stuck over the earthy brown material. She calls the small paintings "Fever Curves" and they look like citiescapes on fire, or the heart rate activity of someone close to death. They are 80's paintings, yuppie paintings, paintings from a time when success was still a choice, they fit in a briefcase. Unlike Rothko, whose screen-like fields absorb you in throes of non-specific emotion, the blue passages here demarcate, either trapping the figures in prisons or they protect, boundaries against the insatiable predators who would strip them down and liquidate their companies for scraps.

It's Autumn in Germany, the hottest on record, the imprisonment is behind us, things are looking worse. In February, Jutta Koether told Carla that 'images are like heroin, you can't just do a little'. An exhibition is like rehab and one day we will get clean.

- Calum Lockey

Artist: Carla Luisa Reuter
Exhibition title: The ¶ Generation
Curated by: Haydée Marin Lopez & Camille Besson
Venue: Café des Glaces, Tonnerre, France
Date: November 5th 2022 – February 4th 2023
Photography: all images copyright and courtesy of the artist, and Café des Glaces
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