

IT'S A WHOLE WORLD OUT THERE –*

the sentence was mounted on the shop window to independent art space Båstadgatan 4 in Malmö five years ago. On the opposite wall, artist Magnus Thierfelder had juxtaposed the text with a drawing, showing two cupped hands, at one and the same time revealing and concealing their content for any potential viewer. An image where key information that might explain the whole situation or at least hint at an imminent explanatory scenario had been boiled down to an absolute reduction. A strategy that in turn created on the one hand an image oscillating between the recognizable of the everyday, and the complete mystery on the other, making both states (literally) tangible, having them existing on both sides: outside of a gallery window, and within a space created by the palm of the hands.

Technically Thierfelder often in this way applies his works directly onto the material or onto the architecture of the space where the work is about to be displayed: ink on paper, ink directly drawn onto the wall, a black carpet is cut out to then be spread out on the floor. Formally the works are reduced to the graphically contrasting black & white, regardless of it being ink, textile or vinylfilm. However, although the works are formally reduced, they will always expand and stretch inside their complex world of ideas. A relationship between content and form which in itself is a tough balancing act and one that always will require a certain precision. Less will still, undoubtedly, be more.

Since Thierfelder's work often hint at a slightly absurd humour, they sometime seem to bump into a set of situations that might have occurred to say a Carl Bark's neurotic Donald Duck. But in this instance a duck rather high on transcendental theory and, instead of throwing tantrums and exercise hysterical gimmicking, enjoying the lowkey and humourous still of *koan*, the zenbuddhist thought experiments that does not allow themselves to be resolved in a traditional way. Thierfelder's imagery world would then best be described as a zen Duckburg, transcended out of its cartoon slab, now moving freely in space, (literally) inside the house and outside of it. Two examples: Even if size remained moderate, the walldrawing Outlook (2005) had no problem in dominating a gigantic wall in the center for contemporary art in Malmö, Rooseum (now finally put to sleep - bless its soul). Nor did Explorer (2006) hesitate to take on a steep facade-climbing project down the drain, although ending up halfway stuck in the gutter for everyone to witness.

This independence - this weird authority inherited in the work - is immediate since the works merely suggest, never exaggerate. In the sculpture Untitled, (pause) (2005) all bright ideas has switched off, now resting indefinitely with their heads stubbornly joined together in a collective passive refusal to light up. This kind of three-dimensional determination turns into pure existentialism in the work Magnificent Desolation (2002-2006). Consisting of a black carpet, two cut out footprints makes it clear that someone finally stepped over the edge. That's one small step for man (sic), to phrase moon traveller Neil Armstrong who should know something about existential feelings taking over. Maybe in Thierfelder's case - contrary to Armstrong's - it is not a giant leap for mankind either. Just quite long enough.

*the author added for this text a hyphen to the sentence. The exhibition at Båstadgatan was a collaboration between Magnus Thierfelder and artist Luca Frei.

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