

after the butcher - showroom for contemporary art and social issues
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Tropical Islands

Laura Suryani Thedja & Eric Meier

Exhibition: 31 March - 7 May 2023

Open by appointment: mailto@after-the-butcher.de or 0178 3298 106

"Come, come! To Germany's largest tropical holiday world with a Caribbean feeling, in Thailand, Borneo, Bali, the South Seas and the Amazon. Not far from Berlin, on sandy ground of the former Wehrmacht and Red Army airfield Brand, stands the cloud castle of Zeppelin lovers - Cargolifter GmbH, converted into a leisure paradise. Without a cigar, but with a good Bacardi feeling (37.5 revolutions), the TI (one* no free sunbeds) offers a fantastic bathing landscape for young and old on an area of 100,000m2 with an unobstructed Eurocentric view of original wooden house replicas from Bali, Thailand and Samoa and of a 100-metre-wide, deceptively real PVC horizon that merges seamlessly into the South Seas. Even the flamingos don't stick their noses in here. Here you can relax, glamp in a teepee, snack on chips, take a sun lounger, a relaxed view and finally enjoy your place in the sun again. ***** " - March 2023*

"Mega" - Ricky Fiesta (entertainer, pop legend)

"The food was great" - Rirkrit Tiravanija (artist)

"We were there with the kids" - Angelina Jolie (UN Goodwill Ambassador)

"I like the paintings" - Georg Baselitz (master painter)

Laura Suryani Thedja (*1993 in Berlin) is a German-Indonesian artist, she lives and works in Berlin. In her mostly serial works, elements of classical oil paintings meet Indonesian batik textiles. In the installations, which span several rooms, the individual works stand on their own, but nevertheless create a larger overall picture. At first glance, the paintings seem naïve and cheerful, but on closer inspection, abysses open up that negotiate the relationship between tourism and postcolonialism. The history of batik is strongly influenced by the exploitation and destruction in the course of European imperialism and colonialism. The use of traditional Indonesian batik fabrics as well as self-produced textile works are important components in Thedja's visual language. For example, in the work "#besttravelmemory", in which Indonesia is reduced to a supposed dream island in the form of a richly laid table full of exotic food and cultural goods. The highly exaggerated figures are often based on the holiday selfies of influencers from various social media channels. By combining half-naked Western beach tourists with traditional Indonesian cultural goods, a queasy feeling is created that raises the question of postcolonial Western arrogance.

At the same time, the exploration of traditional batik techniques as well as the experimental and free interpretation of them in her textile works can also be understood as a confrontation with her own cultural origins.

Exhibitions (selection)

Exhibition for the Schulz-Stübner Prize / UdK / Berlin (2022), *Class Valérie Favre II* / Galerie C / Neuchatel (2022), *Heaven Is A Place On Earth* / Juyeso Space / Seoul (2022), *Kein Schlaraffenland* (No Land of Milk and Honey) / PSR Heizraum / Berlin (2022), *ZIRKUS* / Grisebach / Berlin (2022), *No Fear In Trying* / Art Tausch / New York (2021), *Mit Haut und Haaren* / Raum für Sichtbarkeit / Berlin (2021), *Hunting Hearts* / Projektraum145 / Berlin (2021), MuseumFluxus+Studium / Museum Fluxus / Potsdam (2021), Spring Auction / Weserhalle / Berlin (2021), *IDENTITY* / Holy. Art / London (2021), *Haunted* / Das Gift / Berlin (2020), Art in Context / LaoziArt Contemporary Art Center / Pingyao (Shanxi) China (2021), *Animation of Dead Material* / Künstlerhaus Bethanien / Berlin (2021) *werkschau* / KuBa:Kulturbahnhof / Klein-Warnow (2021), *HEMISPHERE* / Bureau Of Silly Ideas / London (2021), *MERGE* / Alexander Studios / London (2021)

Eric Meier's (*1989 in East Berlin, GDR, grew up in Frankfurt / Oder) photographs, sculptures and video works show urban spaces and fragments in which signs of post-socialist transformation and the loss of social utopia have inscribed themselves. The photographs become indicators of change that bear witness to both individual mythologies and collective recoding or overforming. Man is mostly absent, but marked by his civilisational traces, ruptures and cracks. This rupture continues in Meier's installations. In the process, a third, aesthetic space opens up, whose temporality is located somewhere between utopia and dystopia in the present. Meier's photographic work is often part of spatial installations made of washed concrete, second-hand textiles and fused glass. In the video works, the person who is absent in the photographs reappears in modified form: In stage-like appearances, he counteracts the ideal image of East German masculinity, or unmasks the AfD's use of language. Meier's rhetoric is multi-layered, but does not operate covertly. Themes of failure, loss, or social identity are inherent in the work. He exposes the status quo of dealing with urban as well as media public spaces, where dehumanisation and neglect is often a repressed part of reality.

Exhibitions (selection)

Mit der Tür ins Haus fallen, Neues Museum Nürnberg (2022), *Fermenting: Perspectives on "East"*, GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig, *Flaschen & Geister (Bottles & Spirits)*, MOUNTAINS, Berlin (2022), *Identity not proven*, New Acquisitions of the Federal Collection, Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (2022), *... oder kann das weg? Case studies on the post-reunification period*, nGbK Berlin (2021), *Von der schenkenden Tugend*, Zarinbal Khoshbakht, Cologne (2021) *Reelleti Scheck*, St.- Marien-Kirche, Frankfurt an der Oder (2021), *Don't worry, there will be more problems*, fffriedrich, Frankfurt am Main (2020) *ICI ET LÀ BAS*, Goethe Institut Paris, France (2019) *Wind of Change*, MOUNTAINS, Berlin (2019) *DIKTAT*, Valletta Contemporary, Malta (2019) *Zweifel*, Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlin (2018) *Requiem for a failed state*, Halle 14 Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig (2018)