

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

SANNA HELENA BERGER - EGO & ORCHESTRA

Opening reception: 3rd June 2022, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 4th - 11th June 2022

I wasn't going to write this text. This 'curatorial text' for which I was sent a template and a deadline. The deadline is 8 am, the morning of the show, this morning. It is now 07.46.

The following is written in these subsequent 14 minutes as my daughters favourite show about a girl and her duck friend echoes through our borrowed home in Berlin. I just wrote a whole section about coffee that I deleted. I stopped drinking coffee some time ago, it was both the best thing I've ever done and a massive mistake. 07.49

Last night, when the ship became damp and cold, I went home to finish the monologue that I am about to deliver and found two philosophers on my sofa. They wouldn't want me to call them that and I do it with tongue in cheek and lots of love because of the conversation which was to follow.

It came to be, after pleasantries, about art. The gauche question of what it is. What makes art art and which variables are deciding factors. It was more complex than this but 07.51 - somehow also not, it was refreshingly simple. Because when was the last time you had this conversation with someone? Not with your peers I am sure - this doesn't happen. The topic is such a faux pas you'd feel contrite even broaching the subject. These conversations only ever happen with people who are not in the arts and often you end up having to explain by comparisons. And some of that did occur, but with a tongue twister which awakes the palette - a formula for refreshment. Parallel to this conversation, my partner asks me if I will write this curatorial text or not, having overheard that it needs to be at the printers at 8 and I lie flatly down on the floor and say no. My daughter's aunt and her girlfriend asked me why not. And I fold into tired excuses of priorities and say that part of the work is a written monologue, yet to be finished, and that this needs to be my first one. A monologue which will turn any additional text superfluous because it says it all. In tangled syntax and dense vocabulary, the antithesis of this text and they ask me why I don't simply print this text. I respond by saying that I want it to be experienced in the moment and I have to laugh at myself for believing, for a moment, even for the sake of argument, the fallacy that anyone digests this dense monologue and labyrinthine rhetoric as part of the performance, even with a projected subtext which is added for just this reason, to a text which is just about this circumstance. Asking for too much, for a captive audience in a fluttering social scene. I say I don't want to print it because it retracts from the experience.

But they rightly argue that this makes the work inaccessible and ambiguous and (I fill in from here) by that elitist and exclusive. My instinct to prioritise the work, not a curatorial text about a work where no curator has been involved, not allowing a little transparency in the circumstantial process as a comfort to my surrounding, even as a tangible safety matter, a piece of recognisable appendix to art, the text, to cling to and spend some time with in respite from the social situation, reading-maybe-not-reading. I have the audacity of critiquing a system whilst wading knee deep in. This is what the show is about. I will use my last 3 minutes to describe it as plain as can be. Before not looking it over and handing it in.

I am utterly confused (sometimes angry, but pleasing) about the urgency to have a self as corresponding counterpart to one's work. If you are the artist, you are still, even though an archaic trope, expected to, if not sparkle, at least have a residual shimmer of a visionary in you. If in sound, a virtuoso. But when one is working after 2 hours of sleep because your daughter has a chest infection or when you nearly break open your relationship by overloading it with wild expectations of capabilities of working together as partners whilst parenting, or when you feel the night before your opening the day after, like going home to break open a bag of dill crisps and watching an unbearably bad film in bed instead of keeping making, keep making for whom, keep making why? Keep making mute points in an already oversaturated market of marketable objects in which you sell nothing and so forever poor you land back in moments which have much more a sheen of uncleaned kitchen counter realism than idol. It is about separating the ego from the making whilst making an edition of the self as sculpture, bypassing the object d'art, going straight to the self. You are looking down at the many me's which I have made instead of making objects to which I have to be an accompanying accessory to make the work a success. But then come the complexities of wanting it both ways. Wanting and shunning simultaneously. Becoming paradoxical, contradicting one's own morals, making work instead of eating crisps. It is exhausting to attempt to exude allure as a... 08.01 Oh well.

Unable to finish on time, I will take my friends advice and forgo my urge to save the monologue in my backwards attempt to kill my idols whilst clearly desiring a performance of considerable virtuosity and print it here...

08.02

Text © Sanna Helena Berger

Ego & Orchestra by Sanna Helena Berger is a still life coming into motion. Embodying the banality of the demand to articulate an artist-persona as a marketable soft object. Sculptures assume the position of representation and navigate the maze-like ego-central economy of image. The reflexive diorama then moves into an orchestral act. An arrangement that begins with a solo where later bodies become percussive in this score made for a ship.

The narrative subtext takes on an aerial view, breaking through the metaphorical fourth wall of these scenes where we come to cultivate our allure of the in-person-presence. It is both a critique of and confessional submission to the tangled tropes and perpetuation of the artist-persona et al. Confusing, angry but pleasing, one wants it both ways.

Ego & Orchestra is a sculptural installation and performance by Sanna Helena Berger. Performed by Luisa Alfonso, Veronica Bruce, Ewa Poniatowska, Gloria Regotz & Shade Théret. Sound in collaboration with Samuel Hatchwell.

Sanna Helena Berger is the laureate of Hosek Contemporary Prize 2022.

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