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Björn Dahlem — *Der Niemehrmorgenraum (Time Machine)*

21. October – 12. November 2022
Pop-Up Show at Schönewald

Press release

The exhibition *Der Niemehrmorgenraum (Time Machine)* is the third station in the series of works *23 Meisen* (German for the bird Titmouse) *Birdboxes for Our Neighboring Planets*, which Björn Dahlem began in New York in 2003. The centerpiece of each sculpture is a futuristic design for an utopian *Meisen* birdbox. These *Meisen* birdboxes are to be built in the distant future, when humans colonize outer space, and should be placed on our neighboring planets to guarantee the continued existence of the *Meisen* - as a biological symbol of artistic impetus and anarchy – as well as a safe survival and advancement there. In addition to the *Meisen* birdbox models, all showcases are accompanied by objects and sculptures that are assigned to the temperament of the respective destination planet. Now that the colonization of Mars by humans is technically within reach, and Dahlem has already shown models for all the planets of our solar system in past exhibitions, he is devoting himself to the exoplanets and moons of deep space. These include *Second Earth (Caspar David Friedrich)*, *An Unknown Planet in Eridanus Supervoid (Claus)*, *New Saturn (Melancholia Deep Field)*, the *New Moons (Nix)*, *New Jupiter (Meisenmensch)* and the puberty and pop music planet *Britney*.

The Final Future We Have

Text by Frédéric Schwilden

The present consists of a sense of the future. But in the actual future, we are supposed to live as we did in the past. The utopia of spaceships and rockets has been abolished. The new utopia is no more than folk art and landscape painting.

Yet in the here and now, we activate whirring electric scooters with our phones and glide through the world like children. And the refrigerator automatically reorders our Soylent Green soy milk. But in the world of tomorrow, we're supposed to ride cargo bikes through a metropolis that looks like a famine-stricken Scandinavian village circa 1900—traffic-calmed to create “encounter zones” where people in carbon-neutral and locally produced linen shirts can try their hand at bartering. All is well with the world, only time is broken.

Björn Dahlem still believes in a future of the future. In his *Niemehrmorgenraum (Time Machine)*, he creates the final, ultimate utopia of all utopias, the ultimate future par excellence. After this, there will be nothing. No place. And no time. In a glorious neo-future, his works exclaim: “I want the warp drive, the ultra-future, the ultimate birdhouse.”

Dahlem has been interested in *Meisen* for a long time. In his ultimate future, these birds will colonize the remaining planets of our solar system. They will live and rule in the utopian architecture of his bird boxes.

It was always about the *Meise*; the *Meise* was always the future. If you were attentive enough, they revealed the final future of humanity. There was just a small news item in 2009: “Killer *Meisen* kill bats” ran the snappy headline in *Der Spiegel*. Scientists at the Max Planck Institute observed that *Meisen* invade bats' roosts in winter, when food is scarce. The birds kill the hibernating bats and eat them.

In recent years, *Meisen*' beaks have become longer. This is not evolution per se, but is due to the fact that *Meisen* with longer beaks are able to obtain food more easily. This has been observed in London, where bird boxes are very popular, unlike in continental Europe. The *Meisen* with shorter beaks starve because they have a disadvantage compared to those with longer ones. And so began the era of long beaks.

In the beginning, hardly anyone noticed. Science was preoccupied with other things: AIDS, nuclear fusion, the generation of climate-neutral energy—promising research fields whose prestige ornithologists could not even dream of. But now, with “Niemehrmorgen” just around the corner, when time will soon end and the future will be abolished, things will be completely different.

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Björn Dahlem's sculptures of bird boxes have names like "*Second Earth (Casper David Friedrich)*" or "*An Unknown Planet in Eridanus Supervoid (Claus)*". First of all, they are beautiful objects—esthetic places created by a mind that is sensitive to beauty. They dazzle and sparkle, while smooth surfaces alternate with grids and honeycomb structures, as if an AI, an architect, and nature itself had created them. And within them all are, among other things, a wormhole, a parallel universe, and a time machine in a watch case. The installations themselves are wormholes that combine fantasy with fiction, Blade Runner with quantum physics.

They are playful but nevertheless meaningful places. Dahlem creates an architecture of the future, which manifests in two forms. First, the architecture of the future, namely the spaces that will be inhabited in the future. And secondly, the artist designs the space of the future itself.