

Johnen Galerie

Stefan Bertalan – *Egotronics*

7 February - 21 March 2015

Opening: 7 February 2015, 6 - 9 pm

By default, Stefan Bertalan places his own self in the midst of his research. Yet he is neither a psychologist nor an existentialist. Bertalan is an empirical scientist, one deprived of tools, labs or instruments. One heavily impaired by physical, mental and political misgivings.

In Bertalan's condition, nobody would dare to confront the unknown nature of the given, in a systematic, scientific research. Most of us would stay still and simply survive, too conscious of the widespread lack: of means, of understanding, of power, of time, of health and sense. Rationalist beyond reason, Bertalan ignores the gap between his means and his targets. He uses misgivings as instruments, tirelessly looking for data, patterns, structures, processes. For such research, experimentalists like him would use microscopes, reactors, telescopes. Bertalan has nothing of this kind. He only has a frail body, mind, hands, pens, and a bunch of paper. Still, he delves in the empirical world, using his own self as a telescope and empathy as a particle accelerator. When he approached the ever mysterious sunflower, he literally lived for 130 days with it, noting each move of the plant, from the little seed to the colorful, resplendent adult, and the late, withered, dark stalk.

When this text has begun, Stefan Bertalan was an "is". When this text has finished, Stefan Bertalan is a "was". Importing past tense into a text about the artist wouldn't change the continuous tense of the work. No changes of tense were made to this text, despite the disparition of Stefan Bertalan, on December 30. His revelation-like series *7 Apparitions* also remained the keystone of *Egotronics*.

Stefan Bertalan (1930 - 2014) attended the Institute of Fine Arts „I. Andreescu“ (Cluj, Romania) until 1962. He was co-founder of Group 111, the first community for experimental art in Romania, member of the artist group Sigma. His works have been shown at *The Encyclopedic Palace*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, during the Venice Biennale, 2013.

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