

OFFICE BAROQUE

Bloemenhofplein 5 Place du Jardin aux Fleurs
1000 Brussels, Belgium
+32 484 599 228, info@officebaroque.com
www.officebaroque.com

DANIEL SINSEL

26 January - 9 March 2019
Opening: Saturday 26 January, 18-20h



Daniel Sinsel was born in 1976 in Germany and currently lives and work in London, UK.

For his second solo show at Office Baroque, Daniel Sinsel presents a series of new paintings and works on paper: these are presented as reliefs and constructed textiles, painted on handwoven canvases and incorporating additional natural materials, such as hazelnut shells and cherry stones.

The exhibition is accompanied by the following text written by Michelle Ussher.

Emoji are a sophisticated language. In a playful exchange of messages, a smiley face can be sarcastic, yet out of context it loses that meaning entirely and it is just a symbolic happy smile. Particular to symbols is their capacity to represent condensed meaning. We trust the meaning of the symbol is retained in order for a language of symbols to be understood universally. Yet emoji obtain their symbolic representative and swap meaning readily. It is their particular representative power to be adaptable with ease, and to take on personalised meaning in order to communicate the nuances of being in the world.

I've found myself using a squirting dolphin to communicate "ridiculousness" and an upside-down head to communicate being "out of shape", "being under pressure" or "being exhausted". Emoji have an ability to discharge a feeling that is heavily charged, rendering it with lightness through the transformative gesture of an emoji. They are a reduced representational form of affects. If painting is on the one hand a language of affects, and on the other a product of cultural objects, how are we to understand what these new paintings of Daniel Sinsel's mean?

In a series of exchanges with Daniel, we swapped crying spongebob GIFs. The humanised cartoon cube progressed from squirting droplets of tears, like an out of control sprinkler, to leaking tears over the floor that he soaks up by repeatedly collapsing into them, to shooting tears like a water canon into the mouth of a friend who then returns the gesture. My favourite is of

spongebob unscrewing his eyeballs to allow the tears to shoot upwards like a jet-powered water fountain. They are absurd, unhinged, and acutely express the complex layers of sadness and grief.

Emoji belong to the twenty-first century, however sadness is timeless. What is ontologically peculiar about sadness is displacement. Sadness either displaces the individual from the path of everyday life, or the act of displacing the sadness enables the individual to keep moving along that path. There are few opportunities where one can communicate sadness in its "everyday-ness" without having an existential crisis, and why would you want to? It's sad!

Recently I learned about the designified signifier. It is when the signifier (word / thing / presentation) loses its status as a signifier (presentation) in order to become a "thing" that no longer signifies (presents) anything other than itself - a designified signifier. It can be called the "thing" and we can speak of a "thing's" "thingliness", which is how we can call paintings "things", and speak of the "thingliness" of a painting. We can speak of the "thingliness" of Sinsel's woven fabric that form skins, and the "embeddedness" of shapes defined by colour that give the illusion of a shallow depth of field. I have a fondness for the "dangliness" of the hollow nuts that are attached to Sinsel's paintings, and the "wonkiness" of the works themselves. They sit between clarity and intelligibility. Their nuance is that they compel meaning, in ways that paintings didn't before emoji, although Sinsel's paintings already did.

If we are looking for the origin of these "things" - then we've forgotten that it doesn't exist, and what we are now looking at is the designified signifier - painted cultural objects as a language of contemporary affects. It is what it is, no more and no less. Our acceptance of this, not unlike emoji, reflects our own intelligibility, and out of context, might render them misunderstood.