

Martin Eder *Dystopia*

April 26 - June 1, 2019
Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin



Martin Eder, *Whatever is behind that Door*, 2019, Oil on canvas, 225 x 150 cm,
Photo: Uwe Walter, Berlin

In this dystopia, Martin Eder's female protagonists are exposed, isolated, and alone in impermeable surroundings. They haven't resigned themselves to their fate, but in the end, they lack the strength to rebel. At the threshold between the Now and an imagined dream world, they drowse: absent, staged, unresponsive props at a fashion shooting. Failed because of their own ambitions, like the concrete buildings they move within. Denounced as a dysfunctional utopia, these become the backdrop of the actual dystopia that we ourselves have created. We voluntarily submit ourselves, allowing algorithms to decide on our perception and bots to direct the discussion, place our rights in invisible hands, a silent assent to hostile takeover. Contesting is too great a strain; the promise is too enticing. The spirits of the future, not of the past, have gotten the upper hand; as spooky husks of former individuality, they slink through the world, empty and remote-controlled: just don't be conspicuous or loud. The only communication takes place with one's own mirror image; occasionally, snakes provide company and, as ambassadors, slither between the worlds. Highly symbolic beings that contain evil, devilishness, and treachery as much as seduction, healing, and wisdom. As if they wanted to point the way out of the past of nature and into the promised land of a digital future, blinded by the magic of the dystopia, toward the shadows that it has long since cast ahead of itself.

*The Devil holds the strings that move us!
In repugnant things, we discover charms;
Every day we descend a step further toward
Hell,
Without horror, through gloom that stinks.*

Charles Baudelaire, from the Foreword to
Les Fleurs du Mal, 1857-1866.

Oil slicks and seas of plastic, poison gas bombs and aerial attacks, data theft and surveillance – the world is going under as we watch. The future? A bleak scenario. Martin Eder's painting series is positioned in this dystopian overall mood. As a counter-vision to the optimistic but unrealistic no-place of utopia, his dystopia has long since come into being; his pictorial world has taken it in, quietly and subversively. The bleakness does not manifest itself as a black apocalypse, not as destruction or purgatory, but conceals itself in the violet sky, in neon lamps and concrete ruins, in wrecked cars instead of dead nature.

With the stylistic means and motifs of dystopian fiction – whether Orwell's *1984* or *Matrix* – Martin Eder creates a feeling, a light, into which he plunges his pictures. It shifts between isolation and repression, between unsatisfied hopes and frustration, separation, and decay. But where the title leads one to suspect scenes of cruelty, ugliness, and hate, beauty appears in its demise, a brief flash from the murky surface, *the flowers of evil*.

Text by Leonie Pfennig
Translation by Mitch Cohen

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Biography

1968 born in Augsburg, Germany
1996 – 99 Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden, Germany
1999 – 01 Meisterschüler at class Prof. Bosslet

lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Solo exhibitions (selection)

2019 *Dystopia*, Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin
2018 *PARASITES*, Newport Street Gallery, London, UK
2017 *Martyrium*, Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig, Germany
PSYCHIC, MUDAM Luxembourg, Luxembourg
Above Us Only Sky, Mönchehaus Museum Goslar, Germany
PHENOMENA, ProjectB, Milano, Italy
2016 *La Vida es Sueño*, Galeria Hilario Galguera, Mexico City, Mexico
2015 *Those Bloody Colours*, Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin
2013 *Monsters of Silence*, Gallery Isa, Mumbai, India
The Collective Unconscious, Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE / Geist oder Leben, Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig
2012 *Asymmetry*, Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin
2010 *Ugly*, Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin
2009 *Martin Eder. Der dunkle Grund*, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden Galerie Neue Meister, Dresden, Germany
2008 *Martin Eder. Fotografie: Die Armen*, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany / Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Netherlands

Group exhibitions (selection)

2018 *MASKEN*, Galerie Steinek, Vienna, Austria
NGORONGORO II, Artist Weekend – Lehderstr. 34, Berlin
Neue Schwarze Romantik, Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn und Taxis in Bregenz, Austria / Topicuv Salon, Prague, Czech Republic
A Man is a Man to another Man, South Bohemian Gallery, Budweis, Czech Republic
2017 *Schlaf – Eine produktive Zeitverschwendung*, Museen Böttcherstraße, Bremen, Germany
Neue Schwarze Romantik, Stadtgalerie Kiel / Kunstraum Bethanien, Berlin / Muzeul National de Arta al României, Bukarest, Romania / Galerie der Stadt Backnang
2016 *Sein. Anlitz. Körper. Berlin – Eisenach – Jerusalem*, Neue Synagoge – Centrum Judaicum Berlin, Germany
Body & Soul, Essl Museum – Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg, Austria
2015 *Das Unendliche im Endlichen. Romantik und Gegenwart*, Kunstsammlung Jena, Germany
Malerei, böse, Kunstverein Hamburg, Germany
Schlaflos – Das Bett in Geschichte und Gegenwartskunst, 21er Haus, Vienna, Austria
Gute Kunst? Wollen!, offen auf AEG, Nürnberg, Germany
2013 *on paper*, EIGEN + ART Lab, Berlin
Painting Forever!, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin
Don't Tickle my Spider, Chalet Saqqarah, Gstaad, Switzerland
2012 *Nightfall*, New Tendencies in Figurative Painting, MODEM Centre for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrecen, Hungary
The Dorian Project, Second Guest, New York, USA