

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

TOMISLAV TOPIC - IMMATERIAL CARGO

Opening reception: 30th July 2021, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 31st July - 14th August 2021

Curated by Linda Toivio

With *Immaterial Cargo*, Tomislav Topic presents a work that specifically addresses the spatial and conceptual conditions of Hošek Contemporary. In the former cargo hold of MS Heimatland, his installation is using and intensifying the unique dimensional experience of the gallery. In an austere exhibition space, at times scarcely filled with a minimalist selection of contemporary art, Topic's voluminous installation occupies the entire gallery from wall to wall and floor to ceiling, leaving little room for idle movement.

The artist contrasts the darkness of the space with the light of an expansive golden sculpture, entirely surrounding the visitors in the form of a luminous colour, rendering it in the truest sense accessible and physically tangible. In order to intensify the effect of the colour volume, *Immaterial Cargo* is deliberately monochrome and uniform, and, unlike many of Topic's previous fabric installations, it has no colour gradients or variations in form.

In this context, the golden colour brings several levels of experience and interpretation into harmony: on the one hand, the golden installation contrasts the purpose-bound architectural interior of the ship, while representing in an abstract form the precious cargo inherent in it. On the other hand, the material form of the installation breaks with this luxurious appearance, revealing the gold as a rather permeable and transcendent spatial experience. Entirely made of fibreglass mesh, this relatively cheap utilitarian material stands in juxtaposition against the reflections of a precious metal known in most civilisations as a symbol of wealth. Although resistant and rigid, once hung in 64 parallel rows, the fibreglass mesh appears delicate and light, receptive to the movements of the air.

In the art historical tradition, gold stands for material luxury and the marking of both worldly and heavenly power. In Ancient Egypt for instance, where gold was abundant and lavishly used for tomb ornaments, funeral art, jewellery and weapons, it was not a mere statement of wealth, but valued as it was believed to hold magical powers; the Egyptians thought of gold as the flesh of Ra, the ancient deity of the sun. Since this precious element remains unaffected by water, air, alkalis and nearly all acids, it never corrodes or rusts, giving it an eternal feeling, alluring to many. Thus, in our modest contemporary setting, Tomislav Topic's installation forms a synthesis of material luxury and immaterial metaphysical experience.

The artist equates the spatial experience in the ship's hull with the architecture of a cathedral, where light shines in from above through skylights, while the interior, divided by central cruciform aisles, is enclosed by protective walls. The formerly profane use of the cargo

space gives way to the seemingly sacred appearance of art and through the concentrated atmosphere, enables an experience that goes beyond the physical to encompass both the mental and spiritual. Paradoxically, in early Christianity, accumulating wealth was a sin, while churches, altar pieces and other forms of religious art were adorned in gold, as it was said to represent the immaterial and the light of god. *Immaterial Cargo* stages the "colour" yellow-gold as a symbol of immaterial divine light and the energy of spirituality, triggering an experience that reveals the transcendental power of art and invites us not merely to observe colour and light, but to experience and feel them.

Designed to enable a close contact, more than a viewing from a distance, the set-up of the exhibition unfolds a physical and spiritual experience of art in which visitors are immersed in a dialogue of light and colour. Entering the installation creates an instant connection to one essence of the piece; a representation of the sun, the source of all life, growth and a symbol of immortality.

Text adapted by Linda Toivio, based on Johann Brandes' original interpretation.

About Hošek Contemporary

Established in 2016, Hošek Contemporary is a gallery, performance space and art residency located on a historical boat in Mitte, Berlin. The focus is primarily on performing arts, site-specific installations and experimental sound works. The gallery hosts weekly improvised music sets, providing musicians an opportunity to showcase their sound skills to a Berlin audience.

About MS Heimatland

Built in 1910 in Fürstenberg an der Oder, MS Heimatland was initially operating under the name Ida and used for transporting coal to Charlottenburg. After the Second World War, the 58-meter long cargo ship was renamed Heimatland, meaning 'homeland'. Until the 90s, the ship was sailing on Elbe and Havel, moving sand and chippings. It served for artistic and cultural purposes for the first time in 2002, when German sculptor Christiane Möbus chose it for her *Nackte Tatsache Tatsache* project. Finally in March 2018, Heimatland became the main exhibition space and artist residency of Hošek Contemporary. The boat is permanently anchored in the historic port of Berlin.

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