

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

JOHANNES MUNDINGER - SICHTFELD

Opening reception: 13th September 2019, 5 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 14th September - 2nd October 2019

Curated by Linda Toivio

For his first exhibition with Hošek Contemporary, German artist Johannes Mundinger is experimenting with a new direction; recognised for his large-scale murals and abstract paintings, he is revealing a contrasting mixed media installation for *Sichtfeld*, field of view in English. After a month-long art residency on board MS Heimatland, Mundinger is sharing the results of his research on national state symbols, with a particular focus on flags. Working with fabric, paint and glass, he provides us with a perspective on the redundancy of such objects and their incomprehensible value.

Drawing inspiration from growing concerns over the rise of nationalism and right-wing parties in the recent years, *Sichtfeld* can be understood as an expression of his frustration and disdain towards tightening borders, a sentiment shared by many. In such context, flags held high not only indicate a nationalist ideology, but they also represent another tool for excluding others, reminding instead how one does not belong.

The flag and its symbolism reflect an abstract system, where the narrative is created through colours and shapes charged with meaning, acting as anchors for the disoriented and holding value through fictional stories of our collective identities. Reflecting a dissatisfaction with the national and traditional symbolism of flags, Mundinger is taking a stance by cutting them into shreds before randomly sewing the pieces back together. Consequently, in *Sichtfeld* the flags lose their purpose and cease to have a meaning, becoming mere mosaics or abstract fabric paintings.

At the centre of the gallery, the mirror flag created with mundane objects reflects the world as we know it, inviting us to observe our own identity and those surrounding us. Mundinger points out the absurdity of defined characteristics and stereotypes linked to certain nationalities, presumably recognisable through a variety of national symbols. By deconstructing conventional flags, he seems to invent a system of symbols or a language devoid of prejudice and expectations, thus welcoming viewers to a temporary space without artificial borders.

About the artist

Born in 1982 in Offenburg, Germany, Johannes Munding studied at the University of Applied Sciences in Münster and the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. He has been living in Berlin since 2011. His work often refers to the thematic of a particular location, while dealing with the historical context or social issues of a neighborhood. Aesthetically playing with given elements or atmospheres, he uses them as a basis for developing further motives. His artworks have been exhibited in numerous galleries and institutions, including the Museum Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, the Freiburger Kunstverein (an art association located in the former Marienbad swimming pool) and the Jewish Museum in Krakow. Munding held his first institutional solo exhibition at the Kunstverein Offenburg last year. He has been invited to art residencies in Israel, Korea and Serbia, to name a few, and his large-scale murals can be found all over Europe, but also in Mexico City, Jerusalem and Saint Petersburg. Together with Sophia Hirsch, he received the jury price of the Berliner Kunstverein in 2013. Since 2012, he is a resident artist at Urban Spree Galerie, Berlin.

About Hošek Contemporary

Established in 2016 by Petr Hošek, Hošek Contemporary is a gallery and art residency located on a historical cargo ship next to Fischerinsel in Mitte, Berlin. The gallery focuses primarily on site-specific pieces, performing arts and experimental sound works. During the spring and summer months, the gallery is hosting weekly improvised and experimental music installations, with local and international artists.

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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