



PSM
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Step Away

Markues in collaboration with Juwelia St. St.

09/01 – 10/23/2022

Formless piles covered with camouflage netting sprawl within the gallery's rooms. Under the camouflage are objects from the realm of exurban recreation: ribs of patio umbrellas, stacked chairs, folded-up sunloungers, sleeping bags, and forgotten beach towels. These tucked away relics can be found on boardwalks, terraces, and in Schreber gardens. In the semi-public sphere of the beach, one sizzles lightly dressed among strangers; a Schreber garden is only a private idyll if one manages to ignore one's fifty neighbors. Through the camouflage netting, these objects confront the visitor in a strange state of alienation. Camouflage works only through adaptation to a site and its environment, but at the same time it shows the desire to escape or overcome this environment. At this juncture between site and non-site, Markues presents their own watercolors and paintings by Juwelia St. St.

Step Away means to move aside, to renounce a duty, to desert, or retreat. For the writer Alfred Andersch, freedom lies in these brief moments: "one is never free when one fights against fate. One is never free at all except in those moments when one allows oneself to fall out of fate." This notion of freedom as momentary and related to one's own fate permeates the six literary readings that, over the course of the exhibition, activate the space. The protagonists of the texts recount different ways of letting the expectations placed on them come to nothing. They remind us of the effects of war and nationalistic thinking on the individual. They make clear that—beyond instrumentalized symbolic politics such as homonationalism—queer and marginalized people are absent from the nationalist narratives of the West. They know, therefore, that queers are not part of the body politic. The selection of texts also brings to light which sensibilities and attitudes are undermined when thought revolves exclusively around militaristic categories and obligatory values.

Watercolors from Markues's series *Für die Männer & die Anderen* [For the Men & the Others] adorn the walls as remnants of spoken language and visual equivalents of these brief moments of freedom. The sentences cannot be spoken, at least not in the way they are written. They withdraw from the sphere of political communication and approach the limits of legibility. The letters turn into blobs and formless gestures, searching for another form of rhetoric that defies the logic of the overbearing masculine. The title *Für die Männer & die Anderen* is a fractured address, a summons held in abeyance. *We don't need another hero* echoes the song from Tina Turner; it tells the men that we don't need their heroism, but for the others it contains an egalitarian vision of a society without leaders. *Live and let love* is a quotation from Heinz Heger, who wrote about how he managed to survive imprisonment in a concentration camp by allowing himself to be used sexually. The watercolors remind us that in a moment of increasing armament, art does not necessarily have to make an offer of unambiguous sense.

The gallery's loggia is devoted to small-format paintings by Juwelia St. St. From her broad artistic oeuvre, PSM shows a selection of gardens and seascapes. They are scenes of minor happiness, real and imaginary retreat, because "when I paint from memory it becomes even more fantastic." Even though, as a sort of Schreber-garden-Hockney, Juwelia invites the viewer to bid farewell to the harsh everyday life of the city, she does not fall into glorified country living. The scenes remain indirectly connected to the city: an entertaining getaway, a weekend at the North Sea, an afternoon in a community garden, rather than an attempt to find Eden in the Uckermark. Juwelia's painting style is mannerist and anarchist at the same time. Foliage and flowers fill the picture plane in a millefleur style, plants grow as they please, sometimes winding around lovers, champagne bottles, and little cakes. Her painterly activity defiantly yet self-determinedly asserts the possibility of a better, yet fleeting, world. The beauty of her paintings lies in the fact that she does not modulate; the individual hues stand side by side, do not merge, do not care about a reality beyond themselves. They do not coalesce into a painterly or political program. Juwelia's strength lies in creating a world according to her standards despite adversity, as exemplified by her Gallery Studio St. St. in Neukölln's Sanderstraße, where every Friday and Saturday she serenades, paints, entertains, beguiles, and snubs her guests.

Markues and Juwelia both envisage spaces and places that are not completely abandoned. They are places where notions of the present can be left behind, places that are often just a step away.

Readings

September 3, 2022, 3 – 5 pm:

Juwelia St. and Markues read from *Die Kirschen der Freiheit [The Cherries of Freedom]* by Alfred Andersch in German

September 17, 2022, 2 – 5 pm:

Craig Teatime reads from *The Naked Civil Servant* by Quentin Crisp in English

September 24, 2022, 1 – 4 pm:

Monilola Olayemi Ilupeju reads from texts by Akwaeke Emezi and Rose Allatini in English

October 1, 2022, 1 – 4 pm:

Esra Nagel reads from *Time is a Thing the Body Moves Through* by T Fleischmann in English

October 8, 2022, 3 – 5.30 pm:

Jayrôme C. Robinet reads from *Notizen aus dem Untergrund [Notes from the Underground]* by Fyodor Dostoevsky in German

October 15, 2022, 1 – 4 pm:

Nine Yamamoto-Masson reads from texts from the history of Japanese anarchism and antimilitarism in English

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