

# Artist Lecture Series Vienna

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6 p.m. - Lecture

*Daniel Ferstl*

Hallo. It's a pleasure to be invited here to talk a bit about my art. I've been quite afraid of this grand word of a lecture, which I feel is kind of like a hybris to think about my work as worth lecturing on, but I'll try it anyway. So please be gentle; I'm a bit jittery; this is my first outing as a public speaker, so we'll just maybe slide into it. If there are any questions, just feel free to ask them; you don't have to hold them back until after. I'll try to answer everything as clearly as possible; this is it.

So, as you've heard, I also studied here at the University of Applied Arts, but in a painting class, which was also not just a painting class. Still, for tapestry and animation film, which I thought was a cool thing, I chose this class because it was the space with the most garbage around, like heaps of garbage and empty wine bottles. I thought, okay, that's what an artist's life feels like to me as a 20-year-old, so I enrolled there. I graduated in 2008, and I've been working on my art and showing ever since. I won't start with my uni-years; I will start ten years in the past because I feel like, even though I studied painting, I gradually started to move away from the proper painting as a technique and more into a sculptural way of dealing with the canvas-

based work. So, the first work to get an understanding of where it is coming from is from 10 years ago. I showed with two friends in Berlin in a project space called Je Regrette. It's not functional any more, but I was never really happy with just painting, and so I always tried to flee a bit from it. So I did like clay sculptures and so on, but it always drew me back to the canvas. I thought there must be some other way of dealing with this horror vacui of this blank canvas, so I started to ask myself: can I do something to remove the blankness, the emptiness of the canvas? I started to dye the canvas material to have some visual information that was already present before I started working on it. This was in Berlin more or less ten years ago, and the series of works I did there was called 'limbo', which was, I can show you, this is one of the first pieces. It is actually more of a sculptural thing. It was a large bedsheet or like a pillow and large cigarettes, and the whole theme of what it was supposed to be about was that I had seen this movie, Return to Paradise, from 1998. I dunno if anybody knows it is called, in German, Für das Leben eines Freundes, which is about a trio of young guys from America travelling to Thailand and they think, like this is gonna be the summer of our years. Then they get entangled in like drug things and so on, and they end up in prison, and one of them even gets the death sentence. I thought this was interesting to me because like whenever I go on holiday everything goes to shit. I get like a bad case of diarrhoea.

I nearly drowned in 2006 in Costa Rica because I thought it was a good idea to get good swimming during the nighttime. So I thought, holidays, that's like the thing that I won't do it actively anymore. I just wanna work on it. So the whole thing about these pieces was to get like this idea of escapism, and this whole surfer hippie culture which is somehow a symbol for freedom, personal freedom, like breaking

the shackles of 9-to-5 life and how it can sour, like if you have high expectations on something that sometimes or like most of the time, these expectations can never be fulfilled. So, I'm trying to show you the next slide. I'm not gonna do it in full screen because I might pop out and show you some clips from movies because this is what my works are heavily influenced by, yes. So this was, like, on all the bar. It was a large space, and I did it with Jakob, who was also there and another person. So, this is a painting of the three protagonists early in their holidays. I always thought this idea of running like it was painted on ink or on this tie-dyed canvas, and this idea of the ink being very, very liquid and running down, dripping down, was like a sign of a looming catastrophe or something. These are just the works; I'm just gonna show you to have a reference point where it all started. How I just kind of took this turn away from painting. This was a painting, and there will be other paintings. We are gonna go to the next show which was at New Jörg, a space in Vienna. I was invited to do a show there and, well, it's funny, but this show was also about going on holiday and having a really bad time. So I went, a friend of mine, he always wanted to own a painting by me. He didn't have loads of money, but he asked if he could treat me to an all-inclusive holiday in Egypt. In one of those like Sharm El Sheikh Resorts, I thought, let's do it; I will probably die, but we will try it. It was such a cool thing because it was like a funny thing to me. We were on the plane, and it was a night flight. This is like a diving paradise; you like great reefs and so on, and there are fish and everything else that probably will kill you, but, so I, there was in-flight entertainment, and they showed one movie. There was just one movie to select, and it was called Chasing Mavericks, about the youngest guy to ride like these big waves, and I thought that's like a really nice thing. Like, I am going on holiday

to the seaside. Obviously, he died in the end; he drowned while free diving, and I thought this was such a good thing to show on the way to this diving paradise. And I had like the worst case of like, which some people call the pharaoh's curse because I was stupid enough to eat a salad there, and so I ended up in the hospital here in Vienna. So it never left me, this idea of this movie, of this young guy trying to achieve this weird idea of being like the first guy who ever rood those really high waves, and so these works were always trying, so I try to emulate this spray of waves by the tie die like before putting it on canvas and like the debris that comes with it and so on and with I have had like these copper mini sculptures which were shaped in the way of these waves because there is like a certain craft to it. Yes, so this is more or less this show. Also, like a stupid little drawing, also like somebody tumbling in the waves and nearly drowning or maybe drowning. There is always some kind of dark place in my work. I tried to move away a bit, but you'll see it might not just happen. The next thing was my show at the MUSA museum in 2015; if I'm too slow or too fast, just say something, please. So this was the next show. It was also a tie-dye, and I tried to incorporate printed-on parts which were from animation from Japanese anime, but like cut up so they just look like, I dunno, like candy corn or something. I dedicated this show to my cat, and the show was about asking: What does my cat really like? I tried to list things like what he would like if he were really able to talk to me or something. It was a very light show, and it was about this kind of floating world that you have in an anime movie or in Japanese storytelling and also in this subconscious. There is this; I like that there is visual information and some things in front of it. Let's go back to that. I don't have good photos, so I'm so sorry. The internet and digital cameras end everything. Everything was just invented three years

ago, as you know, and this is all I have, which I took down from my Tumblr, which is still functioning and a goldmine for me for this lecture. So we still have the large cigarettes. I had those large cushions, and it was also on speakers with a playlist of healing sounds, sounds of birds, and waves like soothing, calming things. You know all these things when you can't sleep, and you put on YouTube, and you see these relaxing fireplaces, and there is music outside playing outside or something, and that was like the soundtrack for this show. You can't see it here. Unfortunately, I don't have really good photos of it, but there was, like, with the tie-dye. I also put on song lyrics which were very affirmative and life-affirmative. That was this show; you can see a pillow which was shaped like a small pizza slice, which was then the favourite thing my cat actually rested on for years, so I feel like I achieved something, at least with this show; it was not like the biggest mental cerebral challenge ever but, yeah.

#### *Audience*

Can I just ask what the connection between cigarettes and the cat was?

#### *Ferstl*

I don't know; I'm a smoker, so he was used to me smoking, I guess. He died of cancer, and I hope I'm not responsible for it. You might see that I added a squirrel there because I like him to always look outside the window, and he would see birds and other small animals. I like to go hunting for mushrooms, so I put them in. Also hanging in there is a small cat poster and one of those small clay sculptures I spoke of when I introduced myself. So I did these for some years. They were unburnt clay and just painted with enamel paint,

and then I poured epoxy resin on them so they could be durable and not ceramic. I think people who do ceramics would hate me for calling these things ceramics.

*Audience*

The paintings are all not straight on the wall.

*Ferstl*

Yes, I had them hung like they would be posters in a *Jugendzimmer* (teen's room), what's it called, like you know, like a Bravo poster or something of your favourite pop star, and I imagined, like, this is how a juvenile cat would love it too.

I like this idea of you could have so much; the tie-dye has some kind of entropy to it; you can't tell the dye where it goes, and I was getting sloppy because I am also very lazy, so it went everywhere. So I thought, okay, that's nice and also a bit upside down, which was like one of the things I learned in art school from my professor because I would either hear: it's good or it's bad or turn it upside down. And I did that. It's not that I'm not criticising it; I think it's quite smart. There was a small squirrel again; it was from 2015. I dunno how much I can say, but I'll scroll through.

*Audience*

Is your cat still alive?

*Ferstl*

No, he died last year. This was like 2015, so he was still alive. He was going strong and was a big part of my life. I loved him a lot, and I still miss him a lot.

*Audience*

Did you take him to the opening?

*Ferstl*

No, I think the privilege of a cat is that he doesn't have to go to openings.

*Audience*

Was your cat involved in the process, or was it a studio cat? Was he around while you were working?

*Ferstl*

I worked at home at this time, and I do work at home now again because my studio is just not made for the winter. So, during COVID, I started to work at home again, and I just used my studio as storage. As you can see, with the late work when it comes to sewing and so on, it has to have some decent room temperature; otherwise, you will freeze to death. But I'll show you one piece later where he was actually involved, which I kind of think is the best collaboration I've ever done.

In the same year, in 2015, I was invited to Kunsthalle for a show called Destination Vienna. It used to be called Lebt und Arbeitet in Wien, but they tried to rebrand it to show what's going on in Vienna.

It was nice to be invited, so they commissioned one piece. The one work, the video thing, is not by me; this is all I have. So there's one work which was already existent and one of the curators wanted it and also the small figurines, they also wanted it. Still, they said like it's called Destination Vienna so, please try and do something about

Vienna or like Vienna themed or something which I thought was strange because it's, I dunno, it was a bit, yes, I dunno. I tried to do my best, and you might not be able to see, but on this tie-dye canvas, there's what looks like blood splats or scripts on it. These were also printed on, onto the canvas, and they were showing murder scenes of an Italian movie called *The Strange Vice of Mrs Ward* by Sergio Martino which in German is called *Der Killer von Wien*.

I had seen this movie before, and what I loved about it was 1971 is how dour and dark Vienna is, which is depicted in this movie. A Vienna, which we don't know anymore, but obviously, I feel like it was a very sad place in the 70s and 80s. I love genre movies, I love B-movies, and I especially love movies from Italy because they are the most insane of all. They break all the boundaries aesthetically or morally and so on. I really dig this, a small clip or trailer from this movie, because I just wanna, I want to see what I thought and because it's Vienna themed I think it's quite interesting. So this is the trailer for this movie.

Trailer plays

*Ferstl*

I guess you get the gist of it. I know his movies are problematic. I do know, but what draws me to these movies is the insane creativity these directors had, like Mario Bava, like Dario Argento, who is more well-known for *Suspiria*, this idea of staging everything: the lights, the different colours and so on. I do know I tried to do a full thing now, but I can't; I'm not a tech guy. I tried to put in some cords I needed, and they were like running through the canvas with some weird bondage thing or something. I was just a bit fed up with this idea of having to

do a thing, a piece about Vienna, and I thought, okay, this is what I want. You can see it better here; it was also like a raunchy and small sculpture with this thing. I'm not into bondage at all; I don't know why I did it. One other piece was shown before at WellWellWell, curated by Melanie Ohnemus, which is also one of these clay sculptures. They are more like marshmallows with a fluffy texture. The next one is more like a chocolate thing where somebody already gnarled on it, and I put a funny hat on it because it looked good.

So this was the show at Wellwellwell. The paintings and the piece in the middle are by Tonio Kröner, not me, but the things to the left and right of it. One was more of a camouflage kind of thing, but it was done in a very cute way, so it is pleasing to the eye and removes all the military harshness and stuff from it. Next to it, the wooden panels are like comics or animation, like classical American animation with outlines and so on.

Then, I'll show you a few pieces to show you where it all developed, from this one thing to the next. So you have those knitting Jenny strings that come in and out of the paintings, enamel paint, painting from the backside, and tie-dye on the front. We'll just click through these to show you where it all came from. Yes.

#### *Audience*

What is the size of those?

#### *Ferstl*

These were really small, like 70 by 50 cm. This was a bit larger also from the same series kind of series, and then it developed again into painting with more like the hippie thing which came back from the show before, which, I don't know, I've never professed myself as

a hippie or something. I was never anything like that, but I like this idea of being hopeful that there might be some better things coming in the future. I am a bit critical because I feel like this generation of love might be responsible for many problems we also have right now, but at least they tried. So we have this Earth Day, a patch on it, environmentalism.

There is the first one, which is using a bed sheet as the canvas cloth because I was constantly out of money and people, like my mum and their neighbours, started gifting me everything: old bed sheets for me to draw or paint on, to use. I like this idea of using very, very poor material and material that has already lived. I don't know how many people have slept on these sheets, and now they have a second life. Another was also given by an aunt of mine or something. It used to be her bedsheet; it's horrible, but it's funny because there are so many fabrics that already have this painterly gesture on them. It is very good because you can use it, and it already has the look of a painting. So I tried to just put some small things onto it to have done anything beyond stretching it.

Yeah, there was also another thing with an old blanket I had from my home and also with those knitting Jenny, knitting Jenny. I had to Google this today.

*Audience*

What's the name of this?

*Ferstl*

*Strickliesel*, you know this? It is this thing: you put a wool string in there, and you just turn the string, the wool, inside out, and then there's a hole underneath, and there the string comes out. It's like

what children learn how to knit or do handcraft things with that, and I like that a lot. I like using poor crafts, like things that are not used in a high art context, which is either done by children or what we would have called housewives, everybody knows like a painting housewife or something. I'm sorry, I don't think everybody can be super creative, but we know these terms. But I think there is so much to mine from this kind of homely creativity. I know it's so honest and earnest what people do in their free time, and I always feel like this draws me in rather than high art things like techniques. It's also cool; I don't want to be super critical.

Another of the paintings with a bedsheet was shown at the Parallel Art Fair years ago. This was enamel paint on it. This was the first one with three-dimensional things attached to it. In this case, a scarf and this was called Problem Child because I love those movies. You know, in the movies with the little redhead guy who laughs weirdly, there is a scene in the second part where he puts an amusement park carousel on high velocity, and everybody starts barfing. It was hilarious when I was a child.

Then there was some kind of stop-in-between because I had like a bit of a crisis in my life about what I wanted to do, what I could do, and what I could achieve with my work, and then I met, I made a friend at work. I was working at a call centre at that time, and we made music together. I was disenfranchised by the whole art thing, like by what people, how people behaved and everything, and I thought I really wanna stop, so I did some music with him for two years. We had like a, I wouldn't call it a band; he always forbade me to call it a band because we were just two clowns, and it was more or less a karaoke thing, but we wrote our own songs and reproduced everything, but we didn't play any instrument. So it was from tape, and we had a few

shows, and it was fun. When that period ended, I kind of started to work more on my art again, and this was like the show in 2018, which was like my revival tour, start or something, I know. It was called Life Death, and I was invited to Justice for this space they had at the uni. I chose the title Life Death because I had crept back from this anxiety and depression phase and wanted to deal with art any more. The title Life Death stems from a comic book, an X-Men comic by Chris Clement called Life Death, which is about Storm of the X-Men who was shot with an anti-mutant power gun and lost all her powers. She had to come to terms with it and was even more powerful, even if she had no more powers. It's just a comic book, but I thought the title was very powerful, and I wondered what my life will be like in the next years? I will have an emergency hair transplant, which will fix my looks. Then I will have my palm read about my future, showing me everything will be all right. The photo is not good, but so everything about this was about dealing with sadness, dealing with depression, coming back to it. This is actually what I painted. I don't know if you know the Simpsons episode where Homer Simpson wants to be an inventor, and he invents this make-up shotgun and shoots it into Marg's face. And she says, 'You must have set it on whore.' He tries to shoot again, and Lisa has him shoot it somewhere else, and it's flat against the wall, and I love this kind of; I always love this image of the whole make-up for a face against the wall as somebody asked if I had some collaboration with my cat. This is the one where he chose to collaborate with me because I like put the ink onto the canvas and, it wasn't dry yet and, I don't know if you can see it, but there like his footprints, because he walked through it and I thought it was like a cool thing. Also, part of the show had lyrics. Peace Will Come by Melanie Safka but with a Nike swoosh because we have to talk about money all the

time. I don't know; I thought it was just a fun thing. I like the song Peace Will Come very much. There were also Bjork quotations and so on on it. The one on the right is just crying; tears are coming out of the canvas. I don't know if you can see it. Also, I started to integrate some memes. I dunno. I feel like this whole idea of getting your shit together, and everything can be so affirmative that even that can crush you in the end. You can open Instagram and be flooded with healthy advice and lovely things and lifting your mood up and so on, and you feel like it's getting worse and worse, and so all this was the show about all of this, like the whole thing, like creeping out of a mental health crises and dealing with it. And dealing with the outside of it, dealing with the outside, dealing with you and so on.

#### *Audience*

Are they standing on some kind of bottle?

#### *Ferstl*

Yes, it was jars for marmalade. I got it from my mom, but I put some, you know, those thick wool socks that you get from your mom for the winter, so I put the wool socks over it just like not to get cold feet or something.

Then there are a few works from '18, and so on and onwards. I had this fake Vetements sock, which I ordered on Wish. It says Vetements, I thought like this whole idea of hype culture, this whole hype beast thing, was so stupid, so I made them with this very homely fabric, which, you know, like from old movies and so on, like *Schlager* movies, but I gave it like a gimp feeling, but at least he's wearing a designer sock.

Another work was also about this fragility. I used some dye on it, left it on the fabric for too long, and it started dissolving. It made this kind of funny face, so there are two layers. There is like a normal canvas on the back side, and in front of it, with some distance in between, there is this derelict tattered piece of cloth, and well, it was an accident, so, oops.

The next show was in 2019. Sandra Petrasevic invited me to do a show with Josip Novosel. She curated that, and it was at an old bar that, I don't know, had gone out of business, but it was quite an interesting space. This was where I started to sew, knit, and stitch onto the canvases.

At that point, I was just trying to work myself; I don't know where I am actually, so yeah.

I read a lot of older English novels by the Brontë sisters, like *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, and I always thought, like this wonderful screen desperation that comes through in these works, and I tried to do my best to emulate that also. This is a hint to *Tales of Berseria*, which is a very sad computer game.

Yes, so these were kind of like trying out new techniques and just having fun with everything. They are like, really, really, everything that I've shown you so far was integrated into these pieces.

There were really large ones who had like more of an abstract thing. There is this one which was inspired by either, like, if you go out with artists, there will be somebody who will ask you what your star sign is and tell you your future based on that, which I thought was funny, because, I don't believe in that stuff, but to many, it is very serious. I tried to in light of all the movies I watched, like the post-apocalyptic movies from the U.S. in the ,80s where everyone is like a mutant or mutated or either a cyborg and so on. So I did like a new version of

this palm reading session, so the hand has six figures instead of five. I dunno; I just like this idea of it being very ominous and this tie-dye, which also has this weird pulsating moment to it, which makes it mysterious. It could also be like a neon sign, which is like in one of those 80s movies, you know, like, it's going, like flickering, flickering, that's the right word. Another of these pieces. I like that they shine through, so you can always see the wood I worked on. I do know there's even some stain; this used to be the cover of my sofa, the chequered fabric. This is like a coffee stain or something; I like that you can see all this. I don't want my work to be super, super glossy. I was in London this summer for a residency called PLOP Residency, which is fun to do. It is funded by an artist, Oli Epp, who is very big in business right now and all his friends are also. They are all super young and all very, very rich already and I had like this discussion with them because they said, " Yeah if there are creases in it how can we sell it? They always said it should be super glossy, perfectly made, and you shouldn't see the stitches. I thought, no, that's not what I want to do. I want chaos, and I want to have the freedom to choose whether it should be super glossy or super perfect or, I don't know, pristine works. So this is always gonna come up like some correct things, you know, I never had a formal teaching as a seamstress or something, nobody taught me how to do it, I just taught myself, and it has some kind of, although I was never a punk, which I regret very much, I feel like this is my way of having this punk attitude back in my life, or for the first time in my life through art.

And you have Point Break, which is also one of my favourite movies with Keanu Reeves by Kathryn Bigelow, which also had this surfer thing going on; these are like carefree people just do whatever they

want, and we know it all goes to shit also, which is another thing we have to be mindful of, it always goes to shit.

*Audience*

I would like to ask about the frames.

*Ferstl*

I built them myself; they are a bit thicker. They are like 5 cm or something. I just buy the wood by the meter; I do not know what you would call it *Latten Vierkantlatten*. I just buy them at Bauhaus and have them cut up in the right size. My gallerist is here; they are not straight. I'm trying to better myself; they are much straighter now. The problem is not that I can't do it, because, in my studio, I have an old parquet floor, and there is like one little hump, and this little hump makes it so that every painting has, like, it stands away from the wall for like 1 cm and, I do not know, I have to move studios so I can have straight canvases.

This was another show in 2020; I was invited with two friends, Jacob Breit and Robert Schwarz, to Hamburg in the very beautiful space called Frappant. A large space and we discussed what we would do as a group thing, like to have all the works connect, and as I told you before, I am a huge fan of these Italian giallo movies, those B-movie whodunnit slasher movies and so we watched a few of these together. We decided we could work on a show together and do separate works but have them communicate and be on the same theme, so this is ink on a wet canvas and kind of an Aquarell kind of thing, and then I let it dry. I put some vinyl around so just to emulate, these giallo movies, as I told you before have, for example, if the scenes get very intense like either erotic or violent, these directors chose to do like different

colours, like they had filters on top of the cameras, to just have like a very intense feeling and so with the works I did for this show I tried to do the same. This is a murder scene from *Blood and Black Lace*, which is from 1964 by Mario Bava; it is about some models getting drowned, this model is getting drowned, like models getting killed, fashion models, like a killer in the fashion industry like one of the first giallo genre movies. It is still a bit tame, but it has very beautiful cinematography.

Mario Bava is one of my favourite directors because he is very baroque in how he has the scenery built, and there is so much going on with so much visual information. I will show you a view. This was also a piece with tie-dye and those strings I mentioned before. A sound sculpture by Robert Schwarz in the front had no connection to an existent movie, but I felt like, how can I do like movie posters like alternate movie posters for the kind of genre or something? So I had this kind of pentagram kind of thing; there are some things that could be like rooms or, you know, I hope you know what I mean. There's always a black-gloved killer; I made this large, like 4-meter black glove. There is another one, which will be on the floor in the next picture and a scene from *Profondo Rosso*, which is like a flashback to like this traumatic experience that the killer had, his flashback to his first murder as a child, and also a small sound piece by Robert Schwarz which, I don't know if you know this, but this kind of woolly thing that is on top of mics, they call it a dead cat, and we thought it was such a good thing to have it in a show about murder and everything and mysterious. You can see it a bit better in detail, so this is also Aquarell and vinyl wrapped around it. It is very glossy and has this old-timey movie filter thing, or at least that's what I wanted to achieve. On the right side, you can see paintings by Jakob Breit and

a sound piece by Robert Schwarz, and one of those movie posters is also a black glove. Also, like Trauma to give you some visual information on what this show was about. This ecstatic feel of a frenzy of like being afraid to die. Another view through the halls. We tried to make it as cinematographic as possible and have a real movie feel; we also had filters installed against the walls, which would change the colours, and it was a creepy shop. I loved it and an alternate poster for Il Gatto a Nove Code by Dario Argento, which is not about a cat o' nine tails, which is the English title, but about the murder weapon, which is the cat o' nine tails.

Then we started with Covid, and I thought, what can I do? So I ordered everything online, and I just made these silliest and happy things because I was super nervous. I thought I was gonna die soon. I don't know; I was so afraid of COVID that I didn't leave my house for 2 1/2 years. And so it's just cute animals used with the same foil, but now in a different situation. I like this, like that he is so grumpy, so fed up with it. A sad bear. I don't know.

These were just; I love the pathetic; I love that things are not going well. Everybody has this feeling and idea of showing animals, and it's just camp. It's just camp, isn't it, like your grandma, great aunt, or great uncle? I don't want to just put it on the female here; when you were growing up, everybody had some kind of cutesy knickknacks in their apartments or houses. I just feel like I can't escape it, as if being pathetic is such a human thing. I don't know; not everything goes your way, and sometimes your whole existence is just weird. It's also okay; we have a happy sunflower and the swans who are deeply in love. And the dolphins who are deeply in love and dancing with each other in the waves. This is how the whole series looked; it also had a dog and everything. There is the one piece I brought with me, the

Basket Case piece; you can see it in the back. I started doing alternate movie posters of movies I like a lot, so there are comedies, animation movies, and thrillers, and this was a whole series. How would I do a movie poster? So there is Ruthless People, one of the funniest movies I've ever seen. I recommend it a lot. It's by David Zucker in German; it's called *Die unglaubliche Entführung der verrückten Mrs Stone*. It's like a very, it's a comedy of confusion, and it's about people wanting to murder each other and kidnap each other and how everyone in this movie is an awful person. It's really cynical, and I like it a lot. It's hilarious. Yes, it's a really good movie, and they did all the Airplane and Naked Gun. This one fell through the cracks, but I think it's the best one. I Know What You Did Last Summer because that was one of my favourite movies as a teenager. I Am Here Now by Neil Breen, who is the author of catastrophe. He is one of the worst directors ever, and I recommend seeing his films where he is always a god-like figure; he can do everything, and he is the best at everything he does. The films look terrible. They are terrible, but they are super good to watch. Vertigo, Hitchcock. Basket Case is the one you see there; for the movie Basket Case by Frank Henenlotter. It's about conjoined twins where one is like an evil little creeper who was removed from the healthy kid after birth, and he lives in the basket case, and he is the murderous one, and the other has to deal with his leg little critter twin brother murdering people. These movies. I love this a lot, as well as this and another one, The Day of the Dead, by George Romero. It has a very full atmosphere of paranoia, and it has a saturated look, like in the starting scene. Where you have Miami, Florida, a Floridian scenery and everything is sweaty, everyone is dead, and people are shouting: Is there anybody here? There is a group of survivors who will get mixed up with a military crew, and this is their downfall because

the paranoia in the military hierarchy just destroys them, and they die in the end. I like this a lot.

This was another show in 2020 at the end of 2020. I was invited to Zeller van Almsick for a group show with some paintings. This series was called Three Babies in a Trenchcoat because I sometimes feel that way. I feel like, as an artist, you always have this hybrid of who am I. What am I doing and so on? It's like you are just three babies in a trenchcoat. I don't know. You can see and do and tell everyone what you do is the truth, but sometimes you fumble it, and then people have to swallow it because you are an artist. There was another piece from the show. Here you see it again, obviously smoking because every artist I knew when I was studying smoked heavily. I don't recommend it.

Another piece from the same time was about aggression. I don't know. I always have my problems with the art world, and sometimes I get really, really angry about things, especially things that make me angry because people are so entitled to something or the other. Sometimes, I just want to punch. I would never punch someone with a punch through the painting. Also, that's a preppy guy wearing the Ralph Lauren pullover logo, so he deserved it.

Another one, and then there was this trend where everybody started to do fingers on strings, like metal streams; they were everywhere. I would open Instagram, and they were everywhere. I thought I was going crazy. I didn't want to see fingernails anymore. It's the grossest thing ever. So this is me fighting that.

This is also me as a blob.

Then I started with those works that I told you about, the ones with the upholstery foam-filled parts that are sewn. Every part is sown separately. I arrange them on the canvas and stitch them onto it.

You can see the fun guy, The Thing, because it's one of my favourite movies and I always love the poster by Drew Struzan and so I tried to do like a version of it for me, it's very puffy, and there are layers and layers on top, and it's super thick. And some cats are playing a few pieces.

And Mum Thinks I Should Paint Flowers because that's what my mum always tells me, like, put some pleasant things because they would sell. This is also like with the three-dimensional foam-filled pieces.

I painted them in a spray can way, but they're actually very diluted acrylic colours. It's Gatti Amari, it's cat music. Another piece.

And then we go to my show, sure, 1 1/2 years ago at Wonnerth DeJaco, my first solo show there, it was called Lovers. Well, it was very much. It was my first solo show in a gallery, and so I thought, what can I do to have these works have as much impact as they can be as cute as they are? So, I decided to create three protagonists for it. There was like a dog; the dog you can see in the back there was a flower, and there was a bear. And every protagonist had four representations of themselves in these different works. So you have the sculptural works, for one thing, you have the normal canvases, which were very much about a very curated self; I don't know if this is clear, but a very performative self. You can see this on Instagram and so on, which is also a cultural way of dealing with how capitalism ruins us. In what I feel like this version, that is the one where you feel you are special in front of others. And then, we had the sitting cushions, which I will explain later, which was just a way I liked. I always think it's weird that people can't sit and enjoy shows for longer, so I made these sitting cushions. It should be more comfortable, and then there is the next incarnation, which you see in the back, which were just hearts, and for each of these protagonists, I had hearts, and everyone

had like an abstract piece for it, and there was always some kind of fabric that had some kind of static thing to it. In the way of, I don't know, maybe the subconscious like this in the realm beyond. The thing you don't want people to touch, and it's always guarded by this kind of a cross-sectional thing, which is with the hearts. I like this a lot, and I watch anime a lot. In Neon Genesis Evangelion, there was this wonderful idea of this A.T. field, the absolute terror field that encapsulates us and allows us to be away from others. Just so I don't know to exist as an individual. The series is about a dark society trying to take that away from us so we no longer feel lonely. Everyone melts together into a sea that can never be lonely anymore.

And I kinda like having some kind of armour around me to not be touched too much by others into the depths of my soul, and so on. This was a way to have this impenetrable safeguard for these figures that are fashionable on the outside and showcasing and performing themselves. There is always some darkness to it, yeah it was a show I liked very much, and I'm still very happy I was invited, and the next one is in May. So we have the advert for it, so please come. Here are a few shots from the show, and here you see what I called static. I didn't work on the fabrics for this series. So these are fabrics I found. I love going to the fabric stores and trying to find as many things as possible that have a painterly gesture because they're still canvases, and I still consider them paintings, although they have a three-dimensional thing to them. They reach out to you with, I don't know, for example here with this one, the leaves, they came out about 30 cm or so, and they had like a more of a sculptural for a relief kind of thing going on. I think with that as just having a flat surface because it is my way of turning this whole idea of canvas based works for paintings upside down and being able to do sculptural pieces at

the same time. You can see it again here; he is the talk of the town, obviously.

Now I will show you a few pictures from last year and from this year, including flowers. Obviously, yes.

*Audience*

Do they sell?

*Ferstl*

These?

*Audience*

The flower, the flowers.

*Audience*

You can tell your mom we sell everything.

*Ferstl*

We haven't sold this one. So I don't know.

But the flowers are also a kind of throwback from the show. It is made after the show. Some words where I just tried to reinvent myself after the show just to not be bored by it. There are a lot of flowers in it. I love flowers. The orchid is, also, I don't know. How can one not love flowers? I mean, they are the most fantastic creatures, and they are so durable, and so for every region in the world, you can have a different set of flowers, and I think it's a very resilient way of existence.

A very large dog bone for a very good dog.

These are really large works. That's a very large bone for a very good dog. This is the first one where I tried to do a self-portrait because this

is how I dress in summer, with the movie shirt I love wearing. It's just me. It's complicated enough.

*Audience*

This shirt you don't have this shirt right now anymore?

*Ferstl*

No, it's in that work. But I have drawers and drawers full of movie shirts, so I don't know. This is like pure camp in silliness, and I don't know.

This was this summer at Belvedere 21, On The New show, which I was invited to, and I had lots of space. So I also did a whole new series with flowers, but in this case, I like flowers, as I like this idea of showing them. I painted those with just so gesso, as I did with the paintings. I read a lot of theories about violence, and so on because that's like, I like to submerge myself in media in movies and so on. I read a lot about how horror movies do not have the best reputation, but there are connections when you consider vivisection paintings from the 1600s. And so on. In the 1700s, people always wanted to see something violent. People always wanted to see death. It's kind of an, and some theorists say this is a catharsis. You have this violence inside of you, but this is a way of dealing with it and having someone else do it and looking at it. This is what I wanted to do with this show: to have these flowers as a new species that look at us being violent as a throwback, more or less as something that is only shown in museums anymore, and also capitalising on it. There is a shop obviously because it is a museum. They buy those shirts of our old violence. The imagery was informed by a computer game called The Forest, where your plane crashes, your son gets taken, and you

want to find him. It's a survival game, and there's like mutated people and cannibals on this island, and you have to fight against those to survive, and there's like a murder cult and caves where the murder cults have like drawings against the wall like old-timey like cave drawings and so on. I wanted to use that imagery again, people with my arms, and there is always a thing like, is it violent or is it an erotic thing, or something? This thing is where everything melts together, and it's not obvious anymore. So this was the show there. You can see if you have more photos of it. There are spikes made out of gesso on the one in the back. I don't know if you can see it. I don't know; I kind of became a flower guy.

Now, just to end things, I will show you a few works I did in London, which I mentioned before. So I went to the fabric stores there, and obviously, the fabrics are very English, and I just tried to do the most English thing ever. It was just a month, and I tried my best. I was living in an old cottage with a friend, and I don't know if we had mice, but I think they would look like this. They were called Larry Curly and Moe, and the artist visited the three stooges because one of them is the grumpy one. Another one of those pieces.

We are coming to a close; I know it's been so long. There are just these aliens that they found in Mexico. These are like the Austrian versions, and they look slightly uglier than the Mexican ones. They are made from concrete. They are obviously on a very cosy pillow.

This is the show I am invited to now at L21 in Palma. They own a beautiful city house, and it's beautiful and very nice to other artists. I was very happy to be invited. Everybody knows the Coup Pinocchio; it is what you get for kids, and I always order it because I love it. This was at the Artissima a month ago in Turin, my first solo presentation

at an art fair. So I had to show it to you because I'm super proud of it. The mixture of everything I've shown you before. Thanks.

*Audience*

Can I ask a question about one canvas in the show that ... curated? You had a picture with three canvases shown. Is it okay to go back to that one?

*Ferstl*

Yes.

*Audience*

It's just a curiosity. The fabric you used looks like it portrays many McDonald's sauce containers, and I just want to ask.

*Ferstl*

Which one?

*Audience*

Next one. Next. Yes. This one is on the back on the left. What is it?

*Ferstl*

It is just a 50s fabric. It's one of those crazy mid-century fabrics.

*Audience*

It looks like source containers from McDonald's.

*Ferstl*

Yeah, it could be like ketchup and sweet-and-sour sauce; no, it's

just a crazy 50s fabric that somebody gave to me because they didn't want it anymore. Yes.

*Audience*

Well, that's the thing, right, that people give you fabrics that they don't want?

*Ferstl*

Yes, it happened in Vienna already, but most of the time, it's in Upper Austria. I was born in Linz. My family is there, and I'm always happy to get the worst, the best of the worst they have at home, and I don't work anymore. Cheers.

I prepared loads of video clips for everything, and I forgot about it. But it's all good, so there would have been context for everything, and I only showed you one. That's how it is.

*Audience*

Can you show us The Thing?

*Ferstl*

Yeah, The Thing.

*Audience*

Do you have the making of The Thing, which is cool?

*Ferstl*

No, I would have shown you the scene of the blood test. I don't know if you know it. I was talking about paranoia and so on and The Thing is quite interesting in that it is foremost It is a remake of another film from the 50s, which was very much about and this was

an adaptation of a book from 1938, oh my God I could've told you the stuff. The 50s movie was very much about the red scare and paranoia about who is a Communist and who you can't trust anymore. The 80s is the same thing, but I think it is very interesting. It has the blood test scene and the day it came out in 1982, which is also in the HIV crisis was very prominent, so the blood test John Carpenter himself said it was kind of a hint, like testing the blood for HIV infection and so on. The scene is very interesting because it's quite long. Also, I can skip through it because there is tension between these men in this hut together on the ice. And they finally came up with a way to distinguish who is a real person and who is not. In *The Thing*, there is an alien who can assimilate into others, so you don't know who the real thing is, and it's funny because out of *The Thing* came things like *Among Us*, for example. I don't know if you know the video games and all of the social deduction games. This is one of those very interesting scenes. So they heated a copper wire, and if the blood didn't react, you were a human, and if it did, you were *The Thing* because it didn't like heat because they killed some other Thing with fire before. I recommend you all watch this movie because it's still so good, and it was trashed by critics and audiences alike when it came out. Now, it's one of the big classics and is considered his best movie. So it's also very good health. He builds up tension, especially in this scene. For example, the hand you see here, you always see it while he's testing. It's always a fake hand, but yeah.

The Thing movie clip plays.

*Ferstl*

The cutest and creepiest dog. I am interested in body horror. I have yet to do those works, and now they don't really reflect that, but we'll get there.

The Thing movie clip plays.

*Ferstl*

So that's it. Thank you a lot. It was my first time. I'm sorry if it was a little bit boring. Thank you for your patience.

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