

This is the second in a series of exhibitions that, henceforth, takes place annually under similar premises in the gallery space. *Die Marmory Show II* engages with the question of how success is generated in art, particularly with respect to when it holds off and, consequently, has the subtitle *Impoverishment*.

An art historically relevant document, that was found last year between marble slabs in the gallery - a letter penned (and never sent) by Walt Kuhn in Munich in the year 1912 to his wife - granted the first impetus. Therein expresses the main organizer of the epochal New York Armory Show of 1913 his astonishingly, progressive conceptual, yet never implemented projects, that were stimulated by psychedelic experiences of nature around the circle of Helena Blavatsky und Wassily Kandinsky. Numerous speculations have been made about how such experiments undertaken in nature may have been transmitted in the Armory Show. Impossible to deny is the fact that Kuhn's selection of artists made during his visit to Munich for his first commercial exhibition in New York exerted an extensive influence on artists and the art market. An ongoing engagement with the Munich art circle of the 1910s led to a text composed by the writer and painter Franziska Gräfin zu Rewentlow, and published in March 1914 in the magazine *Simplicissimus* under the title *The Like of it Now Happens*.\* Therein a critique is expressed in regard to exactly such natured monopolistic selection procedures that are not without relevance for the further development of individual artists' careers. Many of the favoured few of that time belong ultimately today to the canon of classical modernism, which raises the question of what happened to the artists, or artworks that did not benefit from this advantage.

It is assumed, although not specifically stated, that in the text this mention of an "uncle from America" who performed a "spectacle" the likes of him, in which only a separate number of "the kings of the stage and the ones who ham it up" were allowed to play a part, it is Walt Kuhn. As a result galleries, collectors and critics hurl themselves into this small artists' troop and guarantee the steady influx of capital and coverage to guarantee its zenith and immortality both in the art market and in the consciousness of posterity. But what happens to the "unfortunates", who all their lives circulate only around the institutional orbit? Part of the ongoing narrative seems to be that a few of the artists who formerly in neighbourhoods-yet-to-be-gentrified started non-commercial off-spaces, or made art, eventually saw their chance, perhaps were discovered (at the very latest rediscovered) and became mainstream, and the others not. The artists in the *Die Marmory Show II* exhibition find words for this pathology, even if, for the most part, atypically accepted phenomenon, perhaps some direct, or others with abstract distance, perhaps (tragic) comic or really disturbing.

\*The decisive hint came from the Berlin-based artist and writer Ariane Müller, who had already, on

another occasion, took a close look at Rewentlow's major work *The Money Complex* (Munich 1916).

*The Like of it Now Happens*

By F. Gräfin zu Reventlow

Now it has become apparent that it always pays off to wait for this uncle from America, from whom the comedy houses draw their material. When time is dark, complications have arisen, he appears on the stage, re-encounters the lost nephew who, up to this point, is in despair, suddenly finds himself subject to countless offers and possibilities. So does the uncle, and one follows the other until the right people have found each other and together, with all of the others, they begin the final song.

Were we happy to see this? To a certain point, yes - because it suspected everyone under the fortune seekers of their ancestors, arrivistes, who someday would remember their distant family. Impossible it was not and we, obsessed with speculations, would find enough space between the Mexican silver mine, on the one hand, and the Russian prince, on the other, for a returning uncle. So now, much discussed and accompanied by quite some mumblings, the American uncle also entered our ateliers and cafés and, as luck would have it, one found oneself again in a theatre seat and had a privileged view of the inner monologues and the grand performances, the kings of the stage and the ones who ham it up. For a long time the stage remained shady, some concoctions were mixed, spells recited, but now our new heroes have appeared in front of us, with their overseas trunks beside them. Make everything a little bigger, we would like to shout at them, the new country is also bigger, the people in a bigger hurry, they say, and with a liking for display. One sees great times coming, that one already knew when they were still small. However, the final song does not yet want to start. From behind the prospect there is still hammering to be heard, and quite a few people are still missing on stage. One has to try to force her child on a potentially willing aunt, the second is negotiating the outstanding rent with his landlord, the third is whiling away his third hour in front of the door of an art dealer, who had promised him a meeting, the fourth has to appear before the police, who have confiscated their press, and the fifth is off to a sanatorium, rumour has it that the family had a part in this decision. Some seem to be hiding because they do not want to be part of the play.

However, let us not turn our eyes from our new operetta kings, the back chorus can quickly be filled up with imitators, once their image has become popular. And then the chorus sounds after all, everyone joins: Heal our benefactors, heal their unerring taste for beauty future generations will

enjoy, and let us simply speak no more of those unfortunate ones who appear to blacken the image with their every day chores.

(Simplicissimus 03/1914)

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