

Dear Jana,

“Apophenia.” That term is stirring somewhere in my thoughts, but I am not quite sure where to yet when I start writing about your work. A few weeks ago, I saw your video work *Untitled #1: all day I've built a lifetime and now the sun sinks to undo it* at your solo exhibition of the same name at Fred&Ferry. On a bench in the black box, I waited impatiently in front of a white screen – like I'm sitting in front of a white page again today. My first words are never rushed, they find their way to the paper terribly slowly. The similarity with your video is striking: here too a number of lines manifest themselves almost imperceptibly on the screen. It's too early to call them contours. After all, they do not yet enclose a comprehensible image. I myself sometimes linger too long in this white sea of possibilities. As if I could conquer an unknown territory here.

Lucy Lippard wrote: “There is no such thing as a void. Those who have seen the void have always found it opening into another void within a void, or into another fullness. The end is the beginning. The tabula rasa is not a blank sheet but one with every bit of its space filled, so that nothing can no longer be distinguished from everything.” Your work is not about the void, nor about the complete fullness that Lippard describes. It is situated exactly in between these. Your photos, videos, and sketches show the game that time plays with these polarities over again. “Everything” or “nothing,” it's not that simple.

Lingering among the dizzying pixels that swirl through your photos, several images loom here and there. Every attempt to pin them down fails. In *Interval #2*, for example, in which a number of upright beams in this otherwise large, black, and uncompromising surface carefully indicate direction. Do we find ourselves between the pillars of an abandoned metro station? In the corridors of a godforsaken bunker? It is strange how a dialogue develops between looking and believing to see – and thanks to your work I am finally aware of that. Actually, you confided in me, the work shows nothing else than a staircase that you photographed from a bird's-eye view.

As a child, I saw a strange man in the corner of my room at my grandparents' at night. When I finally overcame my fear, I stood up. I discovered by touch that it was just a coat rack over which a number of coats had been hung. I had to wait for the morning light to really believe that though. Why do we give the morning light more authority? That made me think of *Zoef #2*. On the window of the gallery you placed a small frame. Only when the sunlight came in around noon were the words “Zoef – what was that?” legible in the small, seemingly blank square. Thanks to a technique using UV-sensitive ink, the words faded when the sun withdrew.

What *was* that? With “Apophenia” – we are finally there – we see or recognize images or connections in things that really have nothing to do with each other. A good example is recognizing all kinds of figures in cloud formations. The phenomenon often has a negative connotation. According to Wikipedia, “apophenia” is often diagnosed in people with psychosis, gamblers, or in conspiracy theorists – after all, they see things *that are strictly speaking not there*. At the same time, the tendency plays a key role in our development as human beings. A pattern-recognition system (even if that pattern is not there), helped our oldest ancestors predict danger or recognize useful foods at the right time. Many scientists refer to “apophenia” as madness, some see it is a valuable form of meaning-giving and imagination. And so I wonder: who then decides exactly where meaning ends and where nonsense begins? Who is so powerful to decide on that line? My questions echo in the lines of Anne Sexton's poem “The Fury of Sunsets,” that also continuously slumbers in your work: “Who is responsible for my psyche, my body, my house, my landscape, that I inhabit? To whom does it belong?” It is not in spite of but *thanks to* that apophenia that I am able to discover a wealth of new images in your photos.

Thus *Deining* sometimes unfolds like a beautiful silver moonscape, then again like the soft slopes of an unexplored body. It's fascinating to see how these photos push the wry limit of *who is allowed to see what meaning where*. For that you use time – which undermines all certainties. Still, I'm equally fascinated by the “noise” in some of your photos. Jacques Rancière tells how the Ancient Greeks only permitted the word “speech” to be used for distinguished, wealthy men while the word for “noise”

was attributed to women, children, slaves, or foreigners. But in that noise lies a power of infinite possibilities, the power of our imagination. Let's move away from the canon chiselled in stone: for our stories – the stories that belong to us – are plural, fluid, and never lead to a dead end.

A little later, there by the bench in the black box, a turbulent rock formation slowly outlined itself. It wasn't until later that I remembered it was Death Valley. The lines that had previously been wary, finally dared to show themselves thanks to time. My eyes glided over the screen from left to right, to make sure they didn't miss anything. That the piece of stone was still there. To make sure that boulder hadn't moved. But every attempt – I should have known better by now – was in vain. And so I let myself sway on the waves of time. Before I fully realized it, the darkness crept over the scene until the last mountain peaks were also extinguished. I'm no longer afraid of that dark now though. After all, Lippard taught me that "the void" did not exist. But I also found comfort in another work, where you quote Bonnie Tyler: *Together we can take it to the end of the line*. To then start again with a blank page.

Kind regards,

Dagmar