

JONAS LIPPS

24 FEBRUARY - 14 APRIL 2018

PREVIEW: 23 FEBRUARY, 6-9 PM

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Tanya Leighton is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Berlin based artist Jonas Lipps. This is his first solo show at the gallery.

The subject matter of the nearly 50 drawings and paintings on view is as varied as their materiality. Associative, chimerical scenes that could have been dreamt by adolescent boys are hung alongside abstractions that seem to refer to something concrete – a flag, a certificate or an advertising template.

Institutions of authority recur, particularly schools. In one drawing a boy with a tree growing from his head crawls towards the door of a teachers' lounge, as if this exclusionary space could hold some small liberation. In another, a teachers' cruise ship battles a turbulent sea with a clock face floating in it. Another teacher lectures to a classroom awash in waves. The discount furniture store Poco is reimagined as a school seeking new enrollees, and moreover as the ostensible victor in a battle of good versus evil. Snakes – perhaps the ur-archetype of evil – rear their heads often in Lipps' drawings. The Poco School proudly advertises that the snake is now dead. Come on in!

What do institutions of authority impart on those subjected to them? We all carry around wallets full of ID cards, go shopping and wait in lines, but what else is going on? Control and self-policing are tested and parodied in Lipps' work, as are the utopic and horrific. The characters in his drawings exist in surreal landscapes dotted with aberrations and hallucinations, archaic symbolism and totally idiosyncratic metaphor. Is it possible that some of these figures are – for lack of a better word – real, while others symbolise the forces that act on them: their second thoughts, fantasies and the social norms they have internalised? These are funny, bizarre and occasionally inscrutable works that make a real commentary on the anxiety of life. Their fantastical imagery and material anachronism serve as clever bits of misdirection. Going out of their way to feel dated or nostalgic, Lipps' drawings and paintings instead establish themselves as urgently contemporary.

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Jonas Lipps was born in Freiburg/Breisgau, Germany. He now lives and works in Berlin. His work has been exhibited worldwide, with recent exhibitions including Gallery Celine, Glasgow; LISZT, Berlin; Paradise Garage, Los Angeles; Galerie der Stadt Schwaz; The Prague Biennial; and Kunstverein Bremerhaven.

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