

Galerie Neu

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Claire Fontaine May our enemies not prosper

03.06. – 15.07.2016

Opening 03.06.2016, 6 – 9 pm

"The desert grows: woe to him in whom deserts hide".

F. Nietzsche, *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*,
1883-5

May our enemies not prosper is a wish for good fortune, because our enemies' prosperity means the desertification of the world and the destruction of resources that are not renewable.

May our enemies not prosper

When no living child will have ever made a snowman, the shells that can be found on the beach will crumble down between the fingers of anyone trying to hear the voice of the sea hidden within their cavity. Some countries will have disappeared under water – the uranium from their nuclear plants, the toxic waste once buried, all spread in the murky liquid – and some others will have become scorched deserts. Enormous pans of ice will have sunken into the sea for months and the waves coming from their fall will have swept away everything and everyone from the surrounding land. The survivors will have fled their unlivable homelands and they will be the refugees of the war against life on earth that we will have all fought and won, and by winning it, we would have lost everything.

Earthman

"You're probably surprised at our lack of hospitality," said the man, "but hospitality is not our custom here, we have no use for visitors."

F. Kafka, *The Castle*, 1926

2015 has seen the world record for displaced persons: sixty million living bodies have crossed the planet to flee violence and starvation. Innumerable people have been coming uninvited to our unsafe and competitive countries. How can we contain the disaster? (We don't dare to say it out loud – the invasion.)

We forget that these newcomers are running from the fear of dictators and militias that they can't upraise against. (Could we, if we were in their place?) Fear rules our days and fear is dangerous, the power is scared too. We need more security, we are told - meaning we need more surveillance.

*Untitled (Rotary spike:
Schwarz-Rot-Gelb,
Schwarz-Rot- Senf,
Schwarz-Rot-Scheiße)*

A poster from May '68 produced in the studios of the occupied School of Fine Arts in Paris read: *I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate, they profit*. Today profit has dematerialized: it can simply stem from the monitoring of communication. Opacity isn't a weapon against this, it's just a modest attempt to keep our exploitation under control. We no longer need to actively take part in something to be vampirized by the power, we can just stay where we are, live our connected lives and provide through them precious information that will be used to make our existences more lucrative for someone else.

Untitled (Fresh monochromes)

Je communique... ils surveillent

The people are missing and at the same time, they are not missing. The people are missing means that the fundamental affinity between a work of art and a people that does not yet exist is not, will never be clear. There is no work of art that does not call on a people who does not yet exist.

What is the act of creation? G. Deleuze 17/5/1987

"We are the missing people"

Banner in an unauthorized demonstration against the El Khomri law
Paris, 17 May 2016

The bleeding that we suffer is anonymously inflicted, but the price of real estate keeps creeping up and soon we will be priced out of our own neighborhood, out of work, out of pocket and then the foreigners at our doorstep will truly look like the enemies that they are not. Our own dispossession destroys the possibility to empathize with others. It's a perfect system the one in which disgraces are impossible to federate, problems appear as disconnected, the others are just competitors, foreigners are a plague.

Caught

Grille (360°)

Untitled (Milestone)

Yet there is something else that we forget.

We forget that every single immigrant, that we see in the streets of our cities, is accompanied by the silent crowd of the ghosts of the people that never arrived. A Syrian woman cried a few days ago in Greece in front of the BBC's cameras, saying that when their boat touched the shore, she turned towards her invalid husband and saw him drowned. "I don't have anything of his, - she said - not a son from him, not even his clothes to smell his memory".

Untitled (Hanging)

Claire Fontaine, 31/5/16