

## the poets still throwing up their hands.

Lotte Gertz, Kalin Lindena, Jane Topping

### Disembodied Poetics

Lotte Gertz' muted expressionism is spare, elegant and utterly restrained. At once arch and aching, Gertz' richly layered language is the distillation of feeling, the blue after the storm. Here, nostalgia is never indulged, but is latched firmly to process – a condition to be worked through, not illustrated, a deliberate spontaneity. Full of paradox and allusion, austere palettes, devoid of warm sunlight vie with Weimar excess – red, black, white, theatre. Yet somehow, this poetic synesthete works her magic and a delicate equilibrium is struck. In Luscher's lab a fragile science is played out, with finespun woodcuts pinned to the walls.

In other works, bathos provides a beginning as archetypes are torn limb from limb and the richness of absurdity is applauded. While she herself could never be so gaudy, Gertz understands the peculiar poignancy in the floral paintings of a Victorian lady. She laughs at the clash of the avant-garde and kitsch, the place where John Wayne meets Danish poetry in a surreal shoot-out, Kierkegaard and Christian Andersen in Bernie's Philosophical Steakhouse. In her own work, an altogether more refined affair, chance juxtapositions are forged and meld together in subtle, understated forms. In this room, past works are revisited, recomposed and imbued with a new immediacy, found fragments pieced together by fortune.

### Transgressive Typography

Stealing, borrowing, patching and mending, Kalin Lindena grabs and snatches at sources as she runs through the night, dodging those in pursuit. Humming covers of her favourite songs in a low voice, Lindena vaults the gap between art and anti-art. Bombing the walls of the Bauhaus in fat-capped Belton, the names of Klee and Kandinsky are writ large – art history rendered in wildstyle. In art, it's fine to bite and Lindena does so with a bold, breezy confidence and a steady heart. A cuckoo with a can in hand, Lindena draws from an endless stream of signs and systems, actively appropriating in whatever mode she chooses. Rhythmic swathes of kinetic energy cover vast spaces – this artist displays a demoniac dynamism which leaves no room for reticence. Lindena's work acts as it did before – confounding expectations as flags, murals, and tattooed walls appear overnight, unwarranted, unsolicited, amazing.

### Teenage Kicks

Idling scribbling fantastical designs in a scrapbook, faint musings become blueprints for banknotes in the State of Thuringia. This deliberate design for unrest confounds the canon – *sans-serif* in a Rococo frame?! Contradictory calligrammes abound as meaning descends like Apollinaire's *Il Pleut*. – words and images dissolving in semantic freefall. A borrowed pen set from WH Smith, thin red frames with the posters taken out, these works were made when artists admitted to their tastes and pleasures weren't guilty. Self-conscious but carefree, tentative yet bold, see-sawing between trying too hard and not giving a damn, Topping's adventures in imagism are *pseudo*-pseudo, deliciously Romantic.

The anatomy and miscellany of memory are both form and content in Topping's craft. The gaps in-between are where we glimpse our own frame of reference, false signposts serving as gateways to free association. Sentiment and semiotics combine in the 'nouvelle conception de la page' and third meanings are anyone's guess. A tangible, bittersweet tension over formalist minutiae is glimpsed through a crack in the studio wall – the wetness and weight of the paper, the opacity of the paint, a delight in the preciousness of these endeavors. And with these tantalizing clues trailing behind her Topping turns on her heel. All that is left is the curious sweep of a monkey's tail, like Lewis Carroll's mouse.

Text by Susannah Thompson

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