

LUKAS THALER
ooze

Vienna

Oct 31 – Dec 21 2024
Opening Oct 30, 6–9 pm

A diorama's proto-cinematographic staging relies on the seamless transition between its painted backdrop, which creates an optical illusion of space, and the three-dimensional landscape elements that serve as a stage for the lifelike objects on display. The accurately scaled layers of depth and sophisticated lighting, where light not only illuminates the presented objects as well as appearing as a painted illusion itself, produce a sort of three-dimensional troupe l'oeil. Most notably, the faux terrain, the fake, merely simulated topography, filters the gaze within a diorama, as it extends the background image into the space like a relief, creating a diffuse zone of transition between illusion and reality.

Lukas Thaler's expansive arrangement of sculptures and object-like paintings lacks a vitrine, yet illusionism remains essential here, in service of a focused narration, a sharply staged fragment of reality. Very little proves to be what it initially seems. Materials act as a substitute for something else, suggesting a different value or consistency and triggering multiple associations. Even as the persuasiveness of these meticulously staged surface textures fades, the works remain eloquent in their signification.

These pictorial objects present themselves ostentatiously in their materiality, yet their seemingly liquid surfaces, where moisture appears to condense, remain solid and firm. Soft painted reflections of light enhance the illusionistic effect while simultaneously displaying it as a principle. As in a faux terrain, the spatial layers in ooze are staggered to unsettle the certainty of our perception. In this exhibition, which experiments equally with modes of presentation and staging techniques, objects engage in a dialogue, raising questions of identification, naming, and legibility along the lines of difference and repetition. Meaningful and apparently circumstantial elements form an ensemble. Images, as an exemplary display of possible consistencies, appear alongside figurative shapes that crossfade reality and fiction.

Tube-shaped elements that resemble tree trunks made from a 3D printer, but whose bark-like pattern is completely composed, have been partially repurposed as lamps, emitting a changing pastel color spectrum. Spherical segments lying on the ground also appear as light sources. Cables trace lines on the floor, adding a graphic layer to the arrangement, while a tree segment serves as a player for a sound piece created in collaboration with Clemens Posch. Light pink large-scale image objects form an abstract backdrop. The illusionistic light incidence reflecting in the painted gradient becomes the directional vector, assigning a place to the works within this spatial setting without establishing obligations

Everything here becomes a subjunctive within a spectrum of varying basic shapes. Each pictorial body, each sculpture seems to exhibit an exemplary consistency: poured, dripping, molded into a relief by using fingers, reproducing folds, compact in volume, hardened and stable. Like the objectified register of characters in a potential novel, these works present themselves as characters with distinct attributes. Laser engravings – a name here, a sentence fragment there – or milled forms also suggest narratives, propose titles, or address us as an observing counterpart. The recurring puffing cloud in Lukas Thaler's work, a ClipArt of unknown provenance, introduces traces of digital image production into the tightly woven repertoire of manually generated realities.

Ultimately, the artistic pretense of false realities serves the overarching principle of bundling in-

dividual elements into a narrative thread, no matter how ambiguous they may be when considered on their own. *Ooze* is a place of transformation, resonance, and reflection, where matter comes to life, much like in a diorama, when the viewing angle is right. Rigid fixations give way to fluid transitions, and what we see is always just a fixed moment of a larger whole. The potential for change shapes this spatial configuration, where it is intentionally kept unclear who the protagonists are and what is only a pretended staffage. Painting triumphs in the end.

Text by Vanessa Joan Müller

Translation by Titania Seidl

Lukas Thaler (*1989) lives and works in Vienna. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including Kunstverein Siegen GER, Kunstverein Eisenstadt AT, Galerie Martin Janda Vienna AT, White&Weiss Gallery Bratislava SVK, Ján Koniarek Gallery Trnava SVK, Berlínskej Model Prague CZ, Bruch & Dallas Cologne GER, Exile Vienna AT, In Spite Of Porto PRT, Ed. Varie New York City USA, Belvedere 21 Vienna AT, Sans Titre Paris FR, MUSA Vienna AT, Guimarães Vienna AT, Celine Glasgow UK, Ginny London UK, Ferdinandeum Innsbruck AT, Club Pro Los Angeles USA, and Drop City Newcastle USA. Since 2012, he has been running the curatorial project MAUVE together with Titania Seidl.

Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman is pleased to announce the representation of Lukas Thaler in the course of this show.