

MARTIN EDER



MAN, THERE'S SOMETHIN' MAKE ME FEEL
GOOD AND IT'S GONNA CHANGE MY LIFE



THIS PAGE: "TUNNEL" (2015). OIL ON CANVAS. 70 X 50 CENTIMETERS. COURTESY GALERIE EIGEN + ART LEIPZIG/BERLIN. PHOTO: UWE WALTER.

OPPOSITE: "IM LETZTEN LICHT - VORBEI AN TRÜBEN GÄRTEN" (2015). OIL ON CANVAS. 225 X 150 CENTIMETERS.
COURTESY GALERIE EIGEN + ART LEIPZIG/BERLIN. PHOTO: UWE WALTER.



WRITTEN BY AMY MARIE SLOCUM

"If kitsch means that it is a total compression of available expression to the extent that the result is the purest form of content that is understandable by the widest range of minds, then I have no problem with the term kitsch." So says Martin Eder, the Bavarian-born, Berlin-based artist (and the man behind this issue's art cover). Eder's work, comprised mostly of figurative paintings that originate from photographs he takes in his studio, could well be called kitschy—with Instagram-worthy animals and explicit nudes—but his technique betrays that classification.

After working in watercolor for many years Eder dove into oil painting, studying the Renaissance masters and finding fresh inspiration in their technique; "I found the punkish attitude, the laziness, and sloppy sexiness in their brush strokes almost pornographically erotic." Eder says, "Real paintings are luscious, lucid, and are—to a certain extent—disappointing. It's a big illusion. Like a magic trick, it's an arrangement of pigments spread by a animal hair bound to a stick, torn across linen."

Pornographic and fantastical are terms that have been misused in

describing Eder's work. Despite visible genitalia and settings that might be found in a fantasy novel, the women who inhabit his paintings are completely of our time. This disjoint creates an uncanny valley in the mind of the viewer. In "Veränderung / Changes" a Botticelli-esque woman sitting on the edge of a bed wears her hair in face-framing bangs and a messy bun, her navel adorned with a black hoop. Eder's work may dip its toes in the kitschy fantasy-erotica world, but it keeps its other foot firmly planted in the contemporary.

We spoke to the artist shortly after his return from the volcanic Mediterranean island of Stromboli where he was recording sounds with his girlfriend and bandmate Lilli for their project LUCID. When asked—in the spirit of the issue theme—what a good time for him looks like, Eder replies, "We have drawing sessions, lazy afternoons full of Tibetan smoked orchid tea on velvet cushions, discussing art, life, and love, listening to Erik Satie, and head banging to Oneohtrix Point Never; completely forgetting the outside world, living in a bubble in our own universe, surrounded by electricity, synthesizers, pizza cartons, and old magic books. Time would stop and the days and nights would drip like honey. The

THIS PAGE: "VOR KEINER MACHT ZU SINKEN" (2015). OIL ON CANVAS. 225 X 150 CENTIMETERS. COURTESY GALERIE EIGEN + ART LEIPZIG/BERLIN. PHOTO: UWE WALTER.

OPPOSITE: "EINFLUSS / INFLUENCE" (2015). OIL ON CANVAS. 75 X 50 CENTIMETERS. COURTESY GALERIE EIGEN + ART LEIPZIG/BERLIN. PHOTO: UWE WALTER.



THIS PAGE: "VERÄNDERUNG / CHANGES" (2015). OIL ON CANVAS. 150 X 100 CENTIMETERS. COURTESY GALERIE EIGEN + ART LEIPZIG/BERLIN. PHOTO: UWE WALTER.

OPPOSITE: "I HAVE A NAME" (2015). OIL ON CANVAS. 75 X 50 CENTIMETERS. COURTESY GALERIE EIGEN + ART LEIPZIG/BERLIN. PHOTO: UWE WALTER.



watercolor that was born out of this process, for the cover of *Flaunt* is the purest fucking form of the term 'good time' for me. Love is the answer! No joke!"

You began your career by painting with watercolor. Why did you move to oil?

I love the lightness and the fluidum of watercolor. Both terms—water and color—have a high esoteric value to me, responding to the source of life and beauty. Watercolors are sometimes very difficult to make, because you have no second chance. It's a very brutal, cruel, and unforgiving medium. It's almost torture when you start with a plain piece of paper in front of you, knowing that in a few minutes you will either make it gorgeous or completely ruin it. It's almost like an adrenaline kick, like jumping off a cliff or meeting the love of your life for the first time.

Each idea you have needs its own kind of expression. Some ideas demand to be written down, some ideas demand to be cooked, and some want to be played with an instrument. There are also ideas that can only manifest themselves in the beauty and the form of old fashioned oil-on-canvas paintings.

or your mediums—that they are just tools. What purpose do they serve?

I use the people and models in my work as actors, playing in my perfidious game of artificial values, belief systems, and learned symbols. I do not want to portray their inner personality, but I'm even more interested in the beauty of their surface as they represent a role and give us a chance to welcome our projections on them.

How important is context in regards to your work?

I tried for decades to create something that has no competition. Context, for me, is not important. I consider myself a journalist and commentator on the world outside, rather than an interpreter of my inner emotions. I think that good art has to have a social mission; it has to be anchored in contemporary circumstances and even criticize society's madness of artificial values and realities. Otherwise, it's pure decoration.

Do you consider your work to be provocative?

I don't, but a lot of people do. Many people don't like to be confronted with their own needs, lusts, and yearnings for love. My work is very private,

not in terms of my own privacy, but in the eye of the beholder. Some people are touched by the imagery I use because it's so simple, but on the other side, it leads a secret path into their subconscious caves and treasure holes.

What do you think about the perception of nudity in western society? Does your work aim to confront this perception?

It seems to me that we love to live in limitations. Life could be so easy and wonderful if we would only start to see it as it is. Pornography has nothing to do with nudity, and being naked doesn't mean that you are nude. At the same time, giving yourself to beauty should be without any boundaries in your mind.

Different forces during the centuries tried to oppress and enslave us, telling us that sexuality is only allowed under certain circumstances. It has been loaded with guilt and shame, or even worse, with intolerance and destruction. We have to break free from this prison. We have to get back to our origins of poetry and beauty. Nudity is very political; we should use it as a tool for freedom and not as a tool for sexism. We have to take nudity back from the claws of capitalism and suppression.