

μυθοποίηση – mythopoesis

Nachricht vom letzten Menschen *The Mythology of Michal Martychowiec*

curated by Julian M. H. Schindele

“The insight is that historiography is organized into narratives, because only narratives are able to connect the individual facts logically and chronologically. Narratives suggest causalities and create continuities.”

Reinhart Koselleck in: *Past Future: On the Semantics of Historical Times*, 1979

Nachricht vom letzten Menschen [Message from the Last Man] is the third part of the exhibition series *mythopoesis*. The series engages with the actualization, the variation and the invention of myths and archetypal narratives, as well as their poetological reflection. In the second part of the cycle, the *Marian Antiphons*, the performance artist Gabriel incorporated myth in his own person, and in the first iteration of the series, *Tempel auf Zeit* [Temporary Temples], the programmatic themes of all Thesaurós artists were presented. This time we are dealing with a *classical new mythology*; a cosmogony in a romantic tradition.

Since 2014 Michal Martychowiec has been working on several bodies of work, which, when viewed together, form a coherent symbolic cosmos. Its inhabitants confront viewers like an overexcited cabinet of mirrors of different modes of contemporary existence, or shed light on questions of history and historical genesis.

In 2016 the artist collaborated for the first time with curator Julian M. H. Schindele and conceived the exhibition *Xenien – Engel mit Spinx Gesichtern* [Xenien – Angels with Spinx Faces]. *Nachricht vom letzten Menschen* can be understood as a continuation and clarification of this endeavor.

On the genesis of the narratives in Michal Martychowiec's system

It is important to emphasize that Martychowiec's cosmos (an organized system of interwoven narratives) is built on already known and existing myths and images. Its elements and their potency arise on the basis of already established (pop-)cultural symbols such as the panda, the rabbit, the apostle Thomas, the tears of the fallen angel Iblis, the thread as an ancient symbol for human life, etc. Martychowiec integrates existing images and narrative formulas into his own 'language'. By adopting, recoding, and continuing them, he is able to change and recast their symbolic syntax without falling into complete idiosyncratic incomprehensibility. Once this is achieved, these elements/narratives/symbols can be used systematically in his larger cosmos. Thus the global cuddly idol panda turns out to be a self-destructive epigone face and mirror symbol for the disoriented neoliberal subject, the use of the Go board becomes a stable and understandable metaphor for history itself. Questions of faith and the genesis of cultural signs may be discussed by means of the figure of St. Thomas.

This synthesizing connection of 'dry' theoretical elements of philosophical reflection with living symbols and signs is an important opening dimension and quality of the work.