

Zu Besuch bei Nagel (A Visit to Nagel's)

Gallerist (on the phone, in English): Galerie Nagel... hi Michael!

No, no, I'm, I'm leaving *on* time absolutely... Yeah, yeah... okay... I just felt that, I guessed Michael, because there is just you. And so, I mean I can find out too how you value this. Ah, okay, ah, okay. Yeah but, did she say that she's on holiday then... No, no. I think much easier would be Tuesday morning, if that's okay with you ... because then she's here anyway. But otherwise Yeah, Okay. Yeah definitely. Perfect.

(in German:)

Visitor 1: Excuse me, is there any text about the exhibit itself?

Gallerist: No.

Visitor 1: None at all?

Gallerist: No, Michael Krebber expressly requested that there be none.

Visitor 1: Oh?

Gallerist: Yes, he was quite fussy about that.

Visitor 1: Uh-huh...

Gallerist: That's the reason that we only have the catalogues here, but nothing especially relating to the exhibit.

Visitor 1: Yes, the hanging is quite light and minimal.

Gallerist: He gave himself soooo much trouble. It took him reeeaaaly long.

Visitor 1: Yes, I was going to ask.

Gallerist: Yes but this time it's really, yeah it was certainly take on painting, which is usual for him, I mean with figurative painting. Often attempts... there, behind the poster, with the spray-paint. He wanted to spray a picture there and it remained at that, it's now just an attempt and ultimately he found this attempt, or this sketch, much more interesting really than that picture, in the end. And it's the same for the things, the found objects, that he actually wanted to modify somehow, but that he ended up just liking as they were. And this picture, (in English) *grid*, how do you say that, net..., no.

Visitor 1: Grid (in German: Gitter).

Gallerist: "Gitter", exactly. The grid with the dots, that unifies the entire work. It's everywhere and, um...

Visitor 2: He did the record-sleeve art?

Gallerist: Exactly, it's a layout he designed for Justus Köhnke, independent of the exhibit, that's how the record came out...

Visitor 2: Is that a new record?

Gallerist: Yes.... 2002. Oh that was actually last year. And that's kind of a take on Sigmar Polke, whose assistant he was, if you can put it that way. And exactly that poster that's hanging there... so he's friends with Stefan Müller too, and Stefan Müller had an exhibit last Summer and he paints a lot of circles. And when you see that, you're somehow reminded of him. And Michael Krebber does takes on other artists a lot and somehow works that into his stuff, too.

Visitor 2: And this Köhnke — is that this guy whose kinda from the House-scene, electronics?

Gallerist: Yes, kinda that, exactly, electronic music, with German lyrics... Yes, he had a show on the Volksbühne (across the street from Nagel) two or three days ago, in fact.

Visitor 1: And that was planned?

Gallerist: Actually, no. They came in and didn't know anything about it, regrettably...

Visitor 2: and then...."oh, this is our record!"...?

Visitor 1: And is this also, this reference to music, is it typical for Krebber?

Gallerist: Actually... so as far as I know not really, but he also copied something from *Spex* (German Pop monthly) for the invitation card.

Visitor 2: And that's from a magazine?

Visitor 1: So that means it always comes up once in a while with him...

Gallerist: Yes, exactly, however this reference to music isn't clear to me in his earlier work.

Visitor 2: Does he have any musical projects?

Gallerist: No, not at all, as far as I know.

Visitor 2: So he's more in contact with artists than with musicians then ...

Gallerist: He was naturally very involved in the Cologne scene in the eighties and also with Kippenberger, he was Kippenberger's assistant, too and... he did some "actions" there... Yeah, exactly Lüpertz. The one in the men's room; so he was... Lüpertz was his professor and so went to the men's room and left — that was in the eighties— a bag full of Lüpertz catalogues there and had a lot of fun with that naturally, when someone found them. And he did that again regularly. Leave a bag in the commuter train or something. In order to confront his role-models, his teachers.

Visitor 2: There's this guy called Cadere. He was a French artist. He had this funny stick with colorful rings on it and he often just left it in gallery exhibitions. And then sometimes, and also in the Centre Georges Pompidou and people didn't take any special notice of what he had done. And at the end of the exhibition they didn't know what it was and they catalogued

it. But that's more this seventies, rather conceptual approach. Because that's much more conceptual than Kippenberger.

Gallerist: Yes exactly. Totally, totally, there are also pure painting exhibitions, here in the office we have... (the office contains a big, colorful painting) only I don't think he would ever call himself a painter, astonishingly enough, although he is really best known for his pictures. I've really noticed that, that everyone's really irritated that there aren't any paintings in the show. That's an older work, really. The idea was to hang something of his back here during the exhibition and he thought we should take this one, but it's not part of the rest.

Visitor 2: And when was the last time that he exhibited paintings?

Gallerist: Well there's a show in New York now, that's painting. That's special about Christian... Nagel is also such a tradition, also in Cologne, the exhibits are always completely concept art.

Visitor 1: Uh-huh.

Gallerist: So that Christian would sometimes say "Hey, why don't you do something that can be sold!" —but that's also simply so *tradition*, too.

Visitor 1: And how is it for the public, is that accessible, I mean people who come...

Gallerist: Some are totally thrilled, others, others are totally irritated naturally, because its so spartan and small, and its too esthetic for some. And I don't know, yesterday, I wasn't here, but we had some artist come in, he wrote two full pages in here and he was really worked up. Like, "you should learn some craftsmanship, and learn to paint first, start that way" and so on. So it seems that it was provocative. But have a positive impression... "Learn some craftsmanship, you artists..."

Visitor 2: And his name is Dionysos.

Gallerist: I couldn't read that, who it is. Well.

Visitor 2: There is a lot of appropriation, sorta, like this page from *Spex* — he didn't do this artwork, so is...?

Gallerist: No, the layout isn't his.

Visitor 2: And so people come in and see a CD and think that's it's valuable art. "Oh, can I buy that? Maybe it's an eccentric collector, so..."

Gallerist: Obviously, it's also true that, I mean, that's a piece of a cupboard that he found. They're all found objects, more or less. Or the record, that he bought at a flea market. They clearly are. But they all have a special meaning for him. They're connected...

Visitor 2: Or they're people from his social ...

Gallerist: Exactly.

Visitor 1: Are there cases where people ask about, for instance, the record?

Gallerist: Yes, but we always have to disappoint them because we don't sell them individually. But you can buy them everywhere so...

Visitor 2: The CD is still on the market?

Gallerist: Yeah, yeah, yeah, there was some Lounge evening.

Visitor 2: And how is this... is this a reference to constructivism, this here? Because one could think that there are these geometric forms on the walls, and there's this totally constructivistic invitation card, so really El Lissitzky-influenced material.

Gallerist: Well that's certainly something that is somehow an important direction for him, so... but I don't know, to be honest... but I would say so because it's obvious.

Visitor 2: Yes, the esthetic has something to do with constructivism, but that had more to do with another way of organizing art production.

Gallerist: Which naturally also, politics plays an important role there, or a take on it, ah... I don't know, I would spontaneously say yes, yes, but I can't say one-hundred percent if those are all really role-models for Michael Krebber. But I assume so, otherwise, well, he wouldn't have selected that invitation card. He really completely...

Visitor 1: But he didn't make any statement about it.

Gallerist: That's really the way he is, that's really the way he is. He says nothing about it. So that's another reason for the press release deal. he says a little, like, "okay, I do it this way here and then everyone should have their own thoughts about it. Leave one relatively on one's own with it."

Visitor 2: Although there's a little word of mouth, people who know him well or that...

Gallerist: Yes, naturally. Mr. Nagel, who already knew him back in the eighties, I think, he can tell stories about stories and so then it all comes together a bit more.