

## GOBI

*Timo Seber*

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presented by Tobias Naehring

It has been a while since Timo Seber had a show in the Rhineland. Back in August 2013, when he had his show at the Bonner Kunstverein, it was my first week at work. Just starting with my curatorial trainee I had the lovely challenge to help his new works that he place sporadically in the massive space. Big mats of a rough coconut weave with a transparent layer floating on top. The layers showing images and quotes of a certain story that fascinated him. Those layers played beautifully with the disturbing subject, the death of a baby in the Australian desert allegedly by a Dingo; the texture of the fabric reflecting on the roughness of the terrain and the story; and a the fact that it was just really hard to wrap your mind around that story - if you check one of the streaming services, they might have a real crime mini series on the case (and of course there is a book). Seber's practice looked different every time I have seen pieces since that time, but there is a striking urge that keeps everything connected. A sense for storytelling that is slightly out of place - his stories are not straight forward, but a loose correlation of very personal associations by the artist. Now, nearly ten years later, this trade is still visible - even more than before. The stories got more personal, tighter connected to his personal life and interests. For GOBI – or *Go Bi* – Seber introduces us to two sets of works, that are intertwined and bizarrely intersecting each other.

Most prominently are the glas pieces, that are engraved, have a hole in the size of a dick and some red wax placed on top of it. Each of them follows a rather gestural melted wax pattern and covers parts of the schematic drawings. These works called *Untitled (I'd appreciate your input)* are the perfect example for his progress in layering. A mistake that is easily done here is to expect that the connections drawn by the artist are coherent or rational, as the look of the works can be in a sense scientific, but the association chain is inherently personal and creates its own set of understanding for each visitor. As *Christian Liclair* deducted the glas itself is a reflection on divider walls in public toilets, made into see through absurdities with a fetish aspect, while the etchings on the glas are based on schematics for magic tricks published in a book the artist found on a trip to Japan. Behind the glas we find photographs that show images of flying toilets and sinks that refer to his parents "Polterabend" – a strange German tradition where as friends and neighbours come together to smash old used porcelain to wish the soon to be weed couple best of luck. Here the afore-mentioned connection comes into full swing, rooting back to the public toilets. Seber's works become an analogue way of displaying his layered thoughts. For

his show at MÉLANGE he empathised the later aspect of that series by changing the entrance situation. People that have been to the space recall two rows of glas blocks surrounding a bleak white door. Seber changed the inlay of the door into a big glas divider wall with a hole in the height of most reproductive organs. The glas is then covered in white wax, blocking certain areas of the exhibition from the outside and inviting people to bend down and look through the hole. It is, as the artist put it, a little bit of absurd magic where you come for the art, but it is also a bit sexual.

The *Untitled (I'd appreciate your input)* is nicely spread out in groups throughout the two rooms and placed on top of another series that the artist made for this show: *GOBI (after Allen Jones)*. This series of mixed media collages is based on a found post card that advertised a 1966 show by Allen Jones at Galerie der Spiegel in Cologne. Inspired by the black hat revealing layered blocks of colours, Seber's obsession with the Japanese magic trick book and layering came to fruition. Sampling the motive in various ways he is able to twist the image appearance, always shifting its context but ultimately making it into a "rabbit in a hat reveal". Here it is possible to see Seber's associative chain while working in action. Each work is loosely based on the last iteration, emphasising a preceding train of thought, ultimately interconnecting his latest work with his oldest.

This is where I get pulled back into August 2013, looking at these big rough woven fabrics reminding me of desert bleached soil.

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