

Something-Etwas

On the Work Group *There is something you should know*

Susanne Bieri

An issue is explored with an extreme stubbornness, examined in all its possibilities, and with a brilliant elasticity the relevant content is subversively, masterfully, and easily executed in a group of works: collages of newspaper pictures with their own respective associations and mechanisms.

Nothing is forced onto the found material or wrestled from it by Santoro; his guidelines on the decomposition of a whole to form a different, structurally richer arrangement are absolutely respected and seem strangely familiar to the beholder: *There is something you should know*. This writing appears as a fine graphite line in some works, as if stenciled in, yet hesitantly trembling, indicating an absent hand and a tone that is at first warning, then enlightening.

The initial point of entry into the image, into the fictional visual world, emerges as if by chance. A motif is found and set, and its form gradually emerges in being treated and beheld. The then present pasted image develops slowly to form series that in a certain way are appropriated by the set issue. In this way, an ensemble of images emerges that points outside itself, a transgression mutating to a more encompassing image, neutrally beheld as if from outside.

It all could also be read as reconstructions of how conditions behave in relation to things, and things to actions, and how actions depend on modes of behavior. The image combines, separates, leaves, singles out, and can be literally perambulated in reading. "From the midst of the context" or "especially important parts" merge to form relations of significance that can expand to spatially expansive networks and that combine the interiorized other aspects of a readerly beholding, thus showing that the separated segments of the world, here visible as text passages, can be amalgamated in a new way, unstopped, rich, and entangled, forming stories of the world, world history.

While reading these images, which is really nothing more than looking behind the superficial aspects of the image content presented in terms of formal and thematic focus, interpretation and significance cancel themselves out and become one. In this way we experience ourselves placed in the paradoxical situation, which initially seems familiar. This "looking" that we might call for the time being a form of consumption blocks out the real present, and fictive reality, created through the gradual act of perception, becomes the absolute present. This imagined reality however can only be called invented as long as the essential addition of this conserved reality is linked as material to our own imaginative world. This specific gaze that we seek as interested beholders activates a process that can only be called the absolute "exhaustion" of given constellations or the systematic exploitation of the incidental or provoked encounter of fundamentally different realities on the same plane.

Ever since the dizzying development of the digital media has produced more questions than answers on their historical career and their visual authenticity, the old technique of collage and the art of combination, coupled with the traditional print-graphic world of the newspaper can be seen in a new light. The image or images Vittorio Santoro excerpts are beyond mere art-historical interest, and become a general field for exploring questions of the technical conditions for visual creation. And that comes face to face with reality and considers it self-evident to not confront it with any new "inventions," allows, records, displays the unbelievable multiplicity of conditions of reality, for there's no reason for something original, provocative, or funny: "everything's not lost..."

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