

## Reading Rämistrasse #43: Leila Peacock on Have Sanity at Last Tango

15.04.2021

Schlagworte:  
Reading Rämistrasse

[tweet](#) [share](#)

RSS Feed

Sense is fashioned and not innate, meaning is wrenched from randomness, just as sanity is also a constructed state that must be carefully maintained but is always vulnerable to the indifferent flux. We have likely all been working hard on maintaining a grip on sanity this past year, in the face of a seismic breakdown in the parameters of daily life. All shows right now are infused with pandemic weirdness. There is a sense of transgression in even standing in an art space after being bludgeoned for months with the behest to 'stay at home'. Everyone is emerging slowly from their hideouts, twitching awkwardly. But there is a need to start to process our collective experience of the great viral vagueness. To get a handle on the dimensions of the suffering that has occurred, while grappling with dismay at the politicians fumbling in the shadow of the reaper, an ugly vaccine nationalism and unimagined new manifestations of social alienation. Our collective sanity is clearly ailing as the novelty of the new normal wears thin and the pandemic grinds on.

The current show at Last Tango takes our uneasy relationship with sanity as its premise. Just as German-speakers will wish you 'health' when you sneeze, they wish that we might 'have sanity' in these disordered times. How to contain those dark unwanted effusions of a mind left to stagnate in its own juices? In response many of the works in this show seem to offer fetishistic visions of binding, stitching, glueing and knotting yourself together again.

We can begin by lusting over Roman Gysin's *Doppelstück II* which reverse engineers the components of a traditional painting; here the canvas, wood and glue are objects of desire in their own right. The paintless pieces of canvas-wrapped wood are ornamented with gold chains that make them look like the regalia for some unspecified ritual. Gysin's *Satinbild* is one of the stand-out works in the show: combining a perfectly angled minimalism with the more vulgar pleasures of red satin, it feels simultaneously refined and indulgent. An immaculate enactment of material control, again slices of wood are bound in fabric with the unrelenting clinch of a latex dress. Oh, it would be nice to feel so perfectly contained, so lovingly fettered.



Manon Wertebroek's pieces have a similar echo of BDSM about them. *Traumarbeit* consists of a series of pretzels embalmed in leather and rope. We have been unable to break bread with our loved ones this year, and here are pieces of bread that are rendered unbreakable, and gloriously inedible. They are hung at gut height, transporting the brain into the intestines, where countless million microbes arbitrate all aspects of our corporeal chemistry. Mouth to arse, the digestive tract is a separate system, wearing us like these pretzels wear their leather casing, our lives structured around the sustenance of this body inside our body.



Lisa Biedlingmaier's works are sometimes looser, but no less controlled. She has smeared the window in swirls of fat that feel like a protective charm against invisible invaders. Her work explores knotted forms that echo human ones, portraits of embodied minds, twisted decorously around themselves. You will have to pass through them to reach Liz Magic Laser's witty video works, both of which use the simple but very effective satirical inversion of children pretending to be adults, forcing any adult watching to recognise that they are themselves just in an advanced state of pretending to know what the hell is going on.



These times have returned art to one of its primary historical roles: to offer consolation or even to be a conduit of healing. A rare treat in this regard is the inclusion of textile artist Lissy Funk's (1909-2005) abstract tapestries. Here they provide a transcendental moment for our addled eyes. It is the kind of abstraction that feels profoundly meditative, aesthetic rapture as mental solace. Each thread winding over and under and about the others, building a form whose only purpose is its own attempt at immanence.

Whatever your sensory predilection, there is plenty here to console those who are fleeing the vampiric online glow in search of the pleasure of three dimensions. So don your mask, brave the smell of your own breath and go and see the show, because it wants to help.

Have Sanity, [Last Tango](#), 12 February-30 April 2021

Images: Roman Gysin, *Satinbild* [*Satin Image*] (*Red*), 2021; Lissy Funk, *Der Weg zu Dir* [*The path to you*], 2002; *Have Sanity*, Installation view, upstairs space; *Have Sanity*, Installation view, Lisa Biedlingmaier; Liz Magic Laser, *The Thought Leader*, 2015; photographs: Kilian Bannwart

*Reading Rämistrasse:*

*Geht der Raum für Kunstkritik verloren, müssen wir handeln. Deswegen schaffen wir diesen Ort für Kritik – Reading Rämistrasse – auf der Webseite der Kunsthalle Zürich und veröffentlichten Rezensionen zu aktuellen Ausstellungen. Diese geben nicht die Meinung der Kunsthalle Zürich wieder, denn Kritik muss unabhängig sein. Feedback oder Fragen? Schicken Sie eine Mail an [rosenmeyer@kunsthallezurich.ch](mailto:rosenmeyer@kunsthallezurich.ch)*

*If art criticism is losing ground, we must act. That's why we created space for criticism – Reading Rämistrasse – on the Kunsthalle Zürich website and publish reviews of current exhibitions. What is published here does not represent the opinion of the Kunsthalle Zürich. Because criticism has to be independent. Feedback or questions? Email [rosenmeyer@kunsthallezurich.ch](mailto:rosenmeyer@kunsthallezurich.ch)*