

Dennis Scholl

“The Song of Inclination”

Text by Domenico de Chirico

DSC Gallery, Prague

“Everything changes, nothing dies.

The spirit wanders, arriving here or there, and occupying whatever body it pleases, passing from a wild beast into a human being, from our body into a beast, but is never destroyed.”

Publius Ovid Naso, *The Metamorphoses, Pythagoras*; Book XV, 165; 1994, p. 613

The great and the small interrupt every ordinary principle of gradation, operating this interruption qualitatively rather than quantitatively, at a moment when the so-called crevice, while shining and bleeding, relinquishes its crucial position in the coming and going of the flow of being. Observing from afar is equivalent to observing up close. Here, hair and tongues become trees, a branch becomes a boy's genitalia, and the human plant poses bucolically like a faun amid metamorphic tapestries and meandering landscapes.

To approach the works of German artist Dennis Scholl is to engage with the entire circulatory system - not just the human one, in this case, the veins of a hypothetical viewer, but even the entire sap of the world. Therein lies the most profound aspect of the artist's work: in the visible and invisible connections, the lines that link one gaze to another, in the nebulous energy of the forces of nature. Everything is undulating. Scholl's images flow, even when they tear, even when a severed snake gets caught between the antlers of a deer.

Instead of speaking of a world made of dream and reality, one should speak of a world permeated by reality, whose components appear in all their complexity: The cruelty of an open wound can be compared to the blossoming of a beautiful flower, each thing constantly entering and leaving another through rhythms of contraction and expansion as part of a circle that continually repeats itself without ever reproducing its most startling manifestations.

In a barely perceptible and fluctuating moment, reaching the highest levels of ecstasy and agony, where the utterly fascinating drops of blood are musical and cadenced, the gazes erotic and languid, vulnerable and fierce, in a dialectical communion imbued with desire and cruelty, the touch of Thanatos meets the impulse of Eros. We seem to sense in this intertwined fabric the idea of an "open" Venus which French art historian and philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman sounded out, where overexposed cruelty culminates in a plane of no return, where aesthetic sanctity reaches the organs and desire goes hand in hand with it.

The nakedness shown by Scholl, however, is not a personal reworking of the binomial seeing-not-seeing, as understood by the French intellectual Georges Bataille, but rather a condition that appears hopeful in all its naturalness, in a world that presents itself in its bucolic and astonishing richness, where leaves are leaves, mouths are mouths and the latter feed on the former. This aspect of nourishment is crucial when looking at Dennis Scholl's vivid drawings: metaphorically, it seems as if each element feeds off the other, or is in the process of doing so - a force that binds all the elements together and visually conveys a sense of the imperishability of being, through the acceptance of mortality and the at times hedonistic display of the cyclical nature of existence.

Each scene depicted appears in the form of a ritual, a consequence of the ritualisation of the act of giving. Therein lies the echo of the gesture, the sonorous impact of which is revealed to be distinctly lyrical. The entire work of Dennis Scholl is permeated by the spirit of this act in the form of a total openness of the figures involved and their mutual accessibility, which is granted by a cosmic interweaving that inextricably links human and non-human, plant, water and stone, blood and sap.

Domenico de Chirico
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