

Jason Dodge
I woke up.
There was a note in my pocket
explaining what had happened.



Jason Dodge
 A current (electric) through (a) tuning fork and light, 2008
 Tuning fork, cable, light bulb, current
 Dimensions variable
 Courtesy Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York

February 6–March 28, 2010

Press conference Thursday, February 4, 2010, 11 am
 Opening Friday, February 5, 2010, 8 pm

Under the suggestive title “I woke up. There was a note in my pocket that explained what had happened,” Jason Dodge (*1969, Newton/USA, lives and works in Berlin since 2003) has assembled about thirty of his works made since 2005 for his most comprehensive exhibition to date and simultaneously his first institutional solo show in Germany.

The exhibition title already suggests the main features of Jason Dodge’s work: The rudimentary, seemingly unfinished objects, sculptures and installations consist of simple items removed from any and all functional context. Only their tell-tale titles, like the note in the pocket, reference in merely a few words the curious combinations of fairytale-like and fabulous materials, puzzling backgrounds and seemingly absurd actions.

Jason Dodge’s approach and stylistic vocabulary is based on the ideas of concept art and minimal art. However, unlike the proponents of minimal art, he does not attempt to structure what is complex, analyze it or make it comprehensible. On the contrary: The ostensible simplicity of Dodge’s works aims at being perceived as part of an endless network. The diverse meanings, stories, truths and facts that touch in his works do not lead to a sole correct solution, but, like the corridors in Borge’s famous Library of Babel, to a succession of ever new questions.

Jason Dodge is a troubadour of the everyday: A soft poetry can be felt in his works when, for example in “**Darkness falls on Beroldingenstraße 7, 79224 Umkirch**”, he removes everything from the house at the given address that can produce light, and gathers them on the floor of the exhibition space. In combination with the title, the light bulbs, neon tubes, candles and matches which at first seem like an arbitrary collection of illuminants, evoke the image of an abandoned house that viewers may perceive to be threatening as well as to be miserable. Like a poet, Dodge composes the non-experiencable from the concrete: A remote house at the edge of a forest, the darkness which consumes it, the atmosphere it exudes. The “once upon a time...” from a fairy tale reverberates in the implied story of the familiar objects, lending them that which André Breton called the “poetics of the everyday.”

A whole range of narrations inherent in the almost fleetingly sketched scene **“You always move in reverse”**. A kilo of silver that has apparently been thrown through the broken window into the room now lies amidst glass splitters on the floor of the exhibition space. The individual elements of the piece already contain a metaphorical value. In their combination, however, the focus is placed on the scurrility of the motives that could have led to such a curious situation. The mixture of admonition and admiration that reverberates in the title underscores the conglomeration of conventions which Dodge reverses with this throw into its opposite: The bar of silver appears absurdly wasteful as an instrument for vandalism. The symbol of waste, throwing one’s money out the window, likewise does not fit: The money was thrown from the outside through the window. The unknown protagonist addressed in the title was perhaps a grumpy philanthropist or a bank robber on the lam who had to quickly get rid of his haul – the complexity of the possible stories grows the deeper one penetrates into the work.

Similar effects occur when Dodge completely foregoes the narrative of an action and combines two fundamentally unrelated matters: A flute, like the ones we might remember from elementary school music lessons or the fairy tale about the Pied Piper of Hamelin, rests on a pedestal. It is unplayable: The finger holes and windway are sealed, and the title **“Poison hemlock in a flute”** reveals that the place where airflow has enabled the production of tones and melodies since prehistoric times now contains the very plant whose poison in the legendary cup of hemlock caused Socrates to die of respiratory paralysis as punishment for his godlessness.

Despite its lightness and simplicity, the musical instrument filled with poison opens up a whole series of associative and connective levels that are continued by an endless network of personal memories, legends, fairy tales and human history. Jason Dodge invites the viewers to immerse themselves in the labyrinth of possible interpretations in pursuit of a common denominator and an answer to the question “what is hemlock doing in the flute?”, eventually finding their own fantastic story. With gestures as quiet and simple as the turning of book’s pages, Jason Dodge weaves everyday items into webs of associations that are as scurrilous as they are poetic.

A catalog designed by Jason Dodge is produced in collaboration with La Galerie, Centre d’Art Contemporain Noisy-le-Sec, France, and will be published by Hatje Cantz in time for the exhibition.

All press photographs and texts regarding this exhibition can be found as downloads on our homepage www.kunstverein-hannover.de under “Press”. For further information and images, please contact presse@kunstverein-hannover.de, tel: +49 (0)511 1699278-12

Parallel exhibition at Kunstverein Hannover

Eckpunkt: Matthias Bitzer - Palimpsest

Opening hours

Tuesdays to Saturdays 12 noon to 7 pm
Sundays and holidays 11 am to 7 pm

Admission

€ 5 / reduced € 3 / members free
Sundays free admission

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