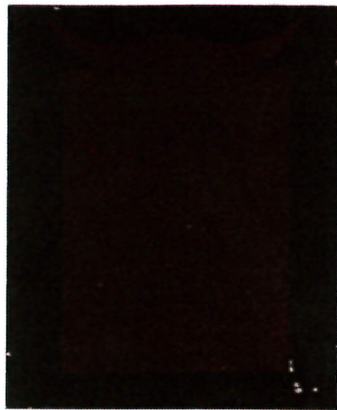


ARTFORUM

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Andy Hope 1930, *Who Goes There 1*, 2016, acrylic and synthetic resin lacquer on canvas, 23 1/4 x 19 1/4". From the series "Who Goes There," 2016.

for himself producing what might be called soiled modernism. (He has also flirted with pop influences, painting Superman, Batman, et al., or otherwise bringing Jack Kirby and Suprematism together.) The diabolic recidivism, then, was apropos. To vouchsafe progress and development on a stylistic level would be false to Hope 1930's underlying concerns.

The artist's compulsive sensibility finds modernism's tabula rasa infested with evil spirits; the golden and silver ages of US comics harbor rank portents of American cultural imperialism. (The ominous barbs here, time clarifies, also resemble Batman's ears.) The spaceship floating amid an eggshell-blue void in *Sky Devil* is a painted, horn-accoutered version of one visible in an early, undated, and untitled collage, clipped from a vintage sci-fi comic; the black egg beside it also appears in earlier works.

Two-Way Paranoid I features two vertical strips of roadway (the "road" of the exhibition title, one presumes, which nods to the post-apocalyptic prognoses of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). Truncated, striped with yellow lines, the thoroughfares could also, in a pinch, be a pair of towers with glowing vertical windows, and seem to fold inward in shallow perspective—not leading anywhere except, perhaps, to a distant echo of René Daniëls's signature bow-tie motif.

Of course, Hope 1930's outlook—the road ahead cut off—might be a slyly designed license to coast, and coast backward, meeting his earlier output along the way. And at a historical moment when it's hardly unsurprising to walk into a painting show and see a dozen slight variations on one motif, aimed at a certain kind of me-too collector—this also emphatically not constituting progress—the predominance of black, horned canvases tempted accusations of market cynicism. Yet "Black Fat Fury Road" arrested the viewer as some of Hope 1930's larger, more diverse shows haven't. It was a matter of theatrics in the hang, and of literally black comedy. We began, reading clockwise, with five progressively suffocating "Who Goes There" paintings—the last veering from the format, a bloodred, horned tombstone shape at its center—before pausing for *Monster*, the triple-claw-mark logo for the eponymous energy drink painted in fluorescent lime green on bright white. Then we were plunged back into the underworld awhile, and so on, experiencing a periodic coming-up-for-air wherein the air, too, was noxious, and the accumulated mood was as much a player as any individual painting. By the final canvas, *Who Goes There 12*, the paired horn motif had transmogrified into claret-colored parallelograms reminiscent of military stripes or—and this was apparently the inspiration, from a sci-fi movie—a robot's malevolent eyes. Why cast out demons that serve you well?

—Martin Herbert

BONN, GERMANY

Marvin Gaye Chetwynd

BONNER KUNSTVEREIN

Some sights are unforgettable. Marvin Gaye Chetwynd's performance *Camshafts in the Rain*, 2016, produced several such sights, including

beetle-like actors wearing enormous colorful paper turbans while staking around the gallery with the mechanical motions of automatons and a seated Medusa whose head, fringed with giant snakes, rose as a handle was cranked, then collapsed back on her shoulders with a heavy thud. The action was punctuated by moments of silence when the turbaned figures stopped as though glued to the spot. The spectators present the production with the wide-eyed awe of children.

In fact, with its antique-looking painted-wood automata and the turban-wearers who turned their cranks, the scene recalled a circus or parish fair rather than a contemporary art institution. The comparison is not meant to be disparaging; on the contrary. Rather than looking down on this sort of popular entertainment, Chetwynd is positively fascinated by the grotesque, absurd, and carnivalesque aspects of demotic theatrical formats. As the Glasgow-based artist says, she is not afraid of bad taste and certainly not of the ridiculous—she embraces the liberating power of the laughter that her bizarre and ludicrous productions sometimes elicit.

That power is an idea she owes to the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Prompted by the parodic aspects of the art of the Russian avant-garde—which still have not received the scholarly attention they merit—Bakhtin first highlighted the critical and emancipatory potential of the grotesque, of impersonation and carnival, in the 1930s. The laughter they called forth not only set people free, he argued, it also undermined authoritarian and hierarchical social structures. Reading Bakhtin inspired Chetwynd to explore popular rituals, street theater, and mythology with a view to those instants of mirthful release. The work of the surrealist Czech filmmaker Jan Švankmajer has been another major source of inspiration for her.

For *Camshafts in the Rain*, Chetwynd delved into the world of historic automatons, a field in which one resident of Bonn boasts particular expertise: Falk Keuten dedicated an entire book, titled *Mechanische Spielobjekte und Automaten* (1990), to the history of such mechanisms,



Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, *Camshafts in the Rain*, 2016. Performance view. Tatiana Feldman. Photo: Simon Vogel.

which reaches back to ancient Egypt and is rife with absurd and monstrous contraptions. From the water clocks of medieval Arab inventors to modern-day robots, humans have devised the oddest apparatuses to bring forth mechanical movement. For the show, Chetwynd had no less absurd wooden automatons built, all set in motion by turned cranks. That is how the Medusa's head rose during the performance, and how a mechanical pianist hit the ivories with delirious abandon. After the performance, visitors were invited to lend a hand and operate the equipment.

The scene played out before a backdrop composed mostly of large black-and-white posters on the walls—depicting dancers, groups of people, and various mechanical contrivances. The floor, too, was covered with paper that the artist had painted with black stripes. The

arrangement looked a little improvised, even amateurish, but made an ideal setting for the bright costumes and the actors' big, colorful turbans. There was no stage; the members of the cast mingled with the spectators, who followed them around, only to be startled afresh every time the Medusa's head dropped back down. As their ever-broadening smiles revealed, they relished becoming participants in the production.

—Noemi Smolik

Translated from German by Gerrit Jackson.

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