

"Reviews: Andreas Hofer, Goetz Collection," **Artforum**, March 2010, pp. 260

MUNICH

Andreas Hofer

GOETZ COLLECTION

Time seemed to flow in all directions in this show. While the exhibition's title—"Andy Hope 1930"—suggested a chronology, 1930 wasn't the only year that played a role: The 1950s and '60s were also evoked, largely via images from comics and science-fiction movies, though quotes from the history of modern art and ancient mythology turned up as well. A prime example of this anachronism was the largest picture in the show, the nearly sixteen-and-a-half-foot-long *Thunder Agent Nevada Doom 4419*, 2004. It shows a golden chariot that floats above a sea of flames as it is pulled by red, blue, white, and black horses. A figure with its fist held aloft—a warrior, saint, or sun god—is standing in the chariot. Down below, a tiny form in the ravaged landscape might be Superman praying or just an awestruck believer wearing a red cloak. Saint Elias as a Christian incarnation of a heathen sun god and the Greek Apollo come to mind; the colorfulness of the image recalls Kazimir Malevich's late pictures, and an emphasis on surface lends an abstract touch. The confusion reaches a high point when one learns that the model for this picture was a tapestry by the Nazi painter Werner Peiner. This sort of hybrid figure—half god, half criminal—can be found everywhere in Andreas Hofer's work, along with warriors, Supermen, devils, animals with human heads, dragons, and dinosaurs.

The artist himself assembled this large assortment of drawings and paintings and specified how they were to be displayed in the rooms at the Goetz Collection. The exhibition presents a world that was always already present: in dreams, fears, comic books, the flights of fantasy described in science-fiction books and films—but hardly ever in modern art, always held in check by the black square against a white background. Yet Hofer's vision comes exploding onto the scene, seeming to burst out of a cave made of cardboard, part of the installation *Trans Time*, 2006. This is the realm of pop icons, of dreams and nightmares, of the imagination itself. But this is not the anguish of German Expressionism. Nor is it the sort of nostalgia we saw in the painting of the '80s. It is an ethos that's been updated: offbeat, trendy, and somehow humorous as well.

Hofer presents us with a world echoing the one described by French thinker Bruno Latour in his marvelous book *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991; English translation, 1993), one filled with grotesque hybrids and mysterious objects that proliferated all the more wildly the more modernism devoted itself to purification and standardization. Now everything that was driven into caves and holes is emerging from them again in Hofer's work, as if duplicated a thousand times over. The artist wallpapered one room with large photographs of his own paintings and drawings, then hung the originals on top of this wallpaper. Superman, a dragon, and a dwarf wielding an ax all appear simultaneously in multiple copies. They become patterns. Just as with comic books and science-fiction movies, there was something a bit addictive about this room—and indeed about the show as a whole.

—Noemi Smolik

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

Andreas Hofer, *Trans Time*, 2006, mixed-media installation.



conceptual tautology on the one hand and the classic rules of perspective on the other. *La Débâcle II* (Debauch II), 2008–2009, uses a similar double register: The title evokes both a natural phenomenon, the sudden breakup of river ice, and the art-historical precedent of Claude Monet, who famously painted such a scene in 1880. In fact, Noiret-Thomé's painting might equally recall an abstract painting by Gerhard Richter or a Chinese landscape, the dialogue perturbed by a certain impression of disarray attributable to flashy, colorful, kitschy plastic trinkets embedded in the work's surface. The sculpture *Rhizome Sweet Home*, 2009—feather dusters in rainbow hues placed in a black plastic bucket—invites us to seek out the order in a joyful jumble, the seriousness in a pun, the image in a pattern, and vice versa. This movement of endless ramification and return plays openly on every possible limitation and distinction.

Upstairs, in the main room, all the paintings were identical in format (about 67 x 55") so as to more effectively articulate the paradoxical nature of painting in contemporary terms. It's as if the pictorial surface, an initially virgin receptacle, had been immediately charged with all the forms and energies that have been manifested on it in other places, other times, other ways, while the act of painting is conveyed in both its irreducible immediacy and its long history. Noiret-Thomé seems to take up a canvas and some colors as if for the first-time, and the diversity of styles displayed by his paintings testifies to this perpetual rediscovery—and the energy and pleasure such an adventure brings with it. But one is always only the last in a long list of artists to do so, preceded by others (Mondrian, Guston, Crumb) whose spirits weave through the artist's decidedly rhizomatic universe, showing from work to work that the image does indeed have a memory.

—*Guitemie Maldonado*

Translated from French by Jeanne Herman.