

NEAN'S BLACK VIDS

Vitty told me that her sister had changed her showroom's location from Oberwil to Basel. Her former business address was already vacant, though still rented till its contractual end. Should we not seize the opportunity to shoot a few videos in the large empty rooms?

By all means. The first video I directed at Mühlegasse 4 was with Lucius as cameraman, as well as cutter. I found the brightly lit and spacious venue inspirational; the camera could be easily moved into so many positions. Even the stripped floorings were intriguing.

When Lucius sent me five hours of film to examine, I could hardly believe my eyes. There were plenty of scenes and at least as many ideas. In all of them the intention to use our new location as an appropriate background came through very clearly, as if it had been our guiding purpose, our message to the public.

Not a single scene was worth keeping.

THE FJ INTERVIEW

An interview between FJ (a fictitious journalist) and N (Nean)

FJ

What attracted you so much to Mühlegasse 4?

N

The showroom's size, well over 200 square meters, comprised of two main rooms with massive bay-windows.

FJ

Your previous shooting locations were small compared to this venue. Is this correct?

N

Yeah.

FJ

Did you have a particular artwork in mind after you first visited Mühlegasse 4? Or did you think, given the size of the place, that you could film almost anything there?

N

Almost anything, really. Adolescent elephants would have fitted in one room, and we could have displayed porcelain on the existing shelves.

FJ

Did you?

N

I don't have elephants.

FJ

But you have porcelain?

N

Yes, but without elephants it's not quite the same.

FJ

What were the technical advantages of filming at Mühlegasse 4?

N

A smaller location restricts camera movements, as well as the placement of the artworks to be filmed. A larger one enables flexibility.

FJ

So, you felt freer, enthused by almost endless creative possibilities?

N

Something like that.

FJ

If you liked that place so much, why did you not make a video about the property?

N

You mean, why did I not film the location instead of filming objects in that location?

FJ

Exactly.

N

Because I'm not an estate agent.

FJ

Most of your videos are silent. You know very well that the majority of viewers resents soundless films, but you still do it. While filming walls, corners, floors, windows or doorways, you could have recorded a live commentary explaining why you found them interesting.

N

That's a great idea, actually. I didn't think about it.

FJ

Artists hold an honorary status in society, because they are credited with worthwhile innovations. Your videos could have been groundbreaking the way I told you (and in other ways). Else, you could have made strong statements to commit yourself to a political involvement. What critical message have you contributed towards a two states solution between Palestine and Israel?

How could your art bring an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine? Isn't keeping quiet a cop out?

N

You get paid to ask questions no one can answer. Isn't that as futile as elusive artworks?

FJ

Getting paid is never futile.

N

What about not getting paid? I don't get paid for my vids!

FJ

Are you kidding me?

THE AKA INTERVIEW

An interview between W (Wolfgang Ink Mark Ziegler) and N (Nean)

W

Nean, what, in your opinion, is the most demanding aspect of video making?

N

To strike the right balance between object and background implies clear decisions, Wolfgang.

Either the background has to be blurred for the object to stand out against its setting, or the setting erases part of an object that melts into it. You can't have everything; what you leave out is as important as what you select and define.

W

Nean, that principle applies to many disciplines, writing music or poetry or prose, and compiling shopping lists...

N

Wolfgang, as always, you're right. Let's say light is probably the most difficult aspect of video making.

W

Oh, right!

N

If you are vague about what you want to film, the camera cannot decide for you what you might like to see, let alone what (you think) you would like to say. In that sense, lighting implements tricky decisions. It reveals and hides. It brings to the fore; it discards, and it modifies. It makes changes perceptible and debatable.

W

Alright.

N

So, what went wrong at the Mühlegasse?

W

White walls. White can be ugly, and at times a major problem.

N

Is this a race-relationship kind of statement, Wolfgang?

W

You and your far-fetched connections, Nean! It might well be; but, we want to concentrate on the technical difficulties encountered when filming an object against a white background. Is that right?

N

Alright. Pale, anaemic, blurred, glossy, glaring... Whatever optical exaggeration you did not manage to correct was caused by the reflective intensity of white surfaces.

W

Exactly, enough with reflection.

Artists have better things to do than reflecting on the state of the world and suggesting clever improvements. Too many people are already helping. And don't they just mess around big time? More of the same are not needed.

N

Stop reflecting. Don't think, embrace darkness.

W

Yes, but joyfully, not in a sullen mood and manner. Melanjoya, not melancholia.

N

What have you been melanjoying about, Nean?

W

I went in for the kill. Even black paint can reflect light, bloody shiny!

N

What's the alternative?

W

Black velvet.

N

Wow, baby! Now, you're talking.

W

Black velvet absorbs light, so that the reflection only affects the object.

N

That sounds good to me. Thanks for your time, everybody. And now over to you, at **the Studio**.







