



## FISCHER'S 'DEATH 2+3+'

On August 2 there closed a curated exhibition by Ryan Trecartin at Vox Populi gallery upon which Ludwig Fischer imposed "Death 2+3+." So far as I know, it received no critical reviews and was hardly noticed by the public or much of the professional art world. This was regrettable because it was an event of considerable importance.

It seemed at first surprising that it was so little noticed, for Fischer has been well known some years now for his "nefarious conceptual dealings" and "corrosive rants," both as an exceptionally original artist and for his unseemly pedigree. Perhaps it was the bad weather that dogged his showing, perhaps it was the holiday season, but one has strong suspicions that it may also have been part of the apparatus of the "deep freeze" that so frequently attends the early years of a radical and sometimes difficult art.

This most recent of Mr. Fischer's impositions generated one of the most densely sustained aesthetic ideas that has been come upon in some time. An opiate tranquility threatened the whole affair, engulfed by silence, marred by touches of unexpected excitement, causing stupefaction, even indifference.

## Modern Labyrinth

This was not, however, fortuitous. It was, I should judge, induced by the plan and materials of the idea. "Death 2+3+" was a modern labyrinth of narrow cerebral passageways constructed of punctuations, insertions, and repeated burglaries. A commodity, cut wood, vinyl, white paper, an art forum, a printer, ink, an email account and a blog, not to mention a name established an immaterial circuit leading into and out of the exhibition like a crypt (catacomb). Intestinally wound, crass and refined, almost Manichean in its lack of subtlety, which accompanies the imposition of a NAME, which tenuously charts a course between the fragmentary parts. Then the object, less an object than a nodal point for a system of exchange relations, a shrine haunted by a dead god. It is indeed easier to erect a shrine than bring a god down to haunt it.

The dissolution of the object into its context here was unforgettable. Its temporal place within the exhibition unclear, before and after, inside and out a blur... beautiful in that discarded sense of the word, bestowing upon the visitor a pleasant, unsought "grace" of the sleepwalker, blissfully unaware of its hidden machinations. It was startling too, because it was hard to believe that such rubbish was capable

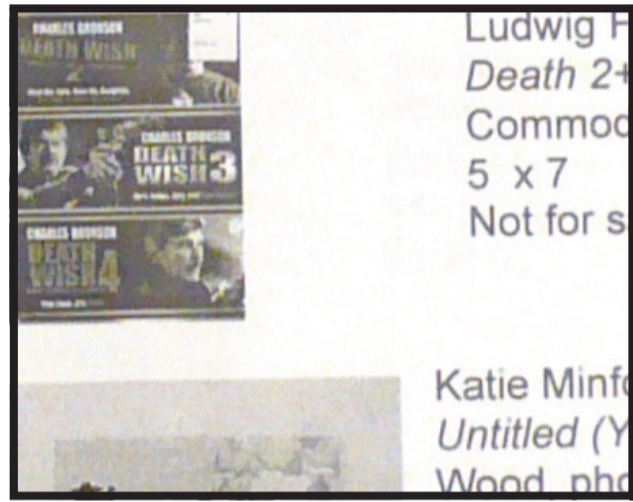
of evoking such a state of mutinous attentiveness and contemplation; immediate, topical, yet suspending time to the point of the untimely...

## Four Tiers

In the virtual center of this sanctum a piece of writing, materially inscribed with the aid of an "altar," an altar, on which was placed one of the most beautiful objects to grace the marketplace, a dvd which naturally asked to be watched, a betoken of a wish, faintly stimulating the memory of an old tale born from the destitution of the 1980s. And all the while the question who and why hung in the air like a torn banner repeating the two words "Ludwig" and "Fischer." A CV obliterated with the geometrical tropes of a bygone age, an artist statement clear as day, a performative outburst, aggressive, indifferent, courting ridicule. A stranger.

One stayed there for a while, quietly enjoying this peaceful state, and then returned as one had come, seeing everything in reverse. A cycle of sorts was complete.

Admittedly, Mr. Fischer's art poses problems. The exhibition is now dismantled, its materials have been carted away by the junkman, and it will not be seen again and one has difficulty discerning where the work resides. If its vocabulary is not unfamiliar, its notions are unfashionable. It will not remain to be judged at a later, more knowledgeable year. Its life has past, and only memory can carry it into the future.



## Instantaneous and Dramatic

Yet I believe Ludwig Fischer's art is not of itself hard to grasp, right now. On the contrary, its impact is instantaneous and dramatic. It is an art both of high seriousness and of emotional breadth. What does present a problem is its apparent relation to an established cultural tradition deemed morose. One no longer doubts whether this is art, but a distrust and fear of such expressions remains, as though they were subtly calling upon death itself. One cannot comprehend an attitude which bluntly embraces something with all the exclusions that such a position necessitates. Perishable materials, perishable forms, perishable genius; chance, change—all conspire to damn this work and dissolve our values. Far beyond "Death 2+3+"s actual content and inhumanity stands Fischer's inadvertent quarrel with all the vapid glories, qualities and eternities which we think are History.

-Paul Kersey, Los Angeles, California

