

FRIEDA TORANZO JAEGER Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, Germany

In 'Deep Adaptation' at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Frieda Toranzo Jaeger paints cars in static states – as if rotating on a dealership platform or parked at some make-out destination. Taking cues from car assembly, the 12 oil paintings (all works 2019) use hinged and folding canvases that open outward like suicide doors. The car is separated from the oversaturated symbol of the open road in order to show how the glossy interior itself is a site for playing with depth and space – not unlike the act of painting.

Sappho depicts two women having sex on a standalone backseat in a jungle. Three Pomeranians stare directly at the viewer from each panel of the triptych, as if to domesticate the overgrowth. In the background, car window frames peek out from under blurry ferns, as the wild jungle further flattens into a wallpaper-like interior. While the sex act disrupts the car as a phallic sign, this decorative backdrop also questions the overdetermined fantasy spaces conjured by, say, lapdogs and plants. Like the glittering stars outside the windows in other works, Toranzo Jaeger's backdrops are the foils to the car's concealed space. But, as these spaces prove flat, it is the bodies, ignoring us in their pleasure that we return to.

Die Wunden sind tiefer im Rolls-Royce (Wounds Are Deeper in the Rolls-Royce) features the empty interior of a car; the blue carpeted floor is electric like a summer evening sky. The canvas is embroidered with a blotchy pattern of white, red and yellow. While Toranzo Jaeger deconstructs the male, fantasizing gaze in *Sappho*, this cosmetic intervention on the canvas uses formal action to collapse the car's space. This stitching not only cites craft traditions long kept outside the great halls of art – and the gender politics behind this exclusion – but also works to short-circuit the

car's deep gradient, revealing its depth as another gimmick.

Folded into the windows and rearview mirrors of *Deep Adaption on Audi Aicon 2020 costume design by H. Memling* (2019) are scenes from painter Hans Memling's triptychs. With their inflated, soft brushstrokes, they look as if viewed through a prism. Here, the car's spatial parceling is not just the domain of industry but artistic representation. The triptych is coded from left to right: trumpets of heaven phase into a horizonless hell. In contrast, the suicide doors beckon with an uncanny symmetry. The car is mirrored, a palindrome of luxury. A single reclining seat holds the centre. Does Toranzo Jaeger herald the self-driving age by collapsing the distinction between driver and passenger, front and back? Like Narcissus gazing at his own image, the car becomes a closed circuit of desire, sealed off from the world.

Built from diamond-shaped canvases arranged into a logo-like star, *Der Wert der Ware drückt sich am besten in den Körpern der Anderen aus* (The Value of Commodities Best Expresses Itself in the Bodies of Others), which cribs its title from Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Capital, 1867), reveals the backs of black and brown women's bodies (nude, or with thongs halfway down their thighs), patent leather surfaces, a steering wheel and a chrome rim. Zoomed in and abstracted, the car is no longer depicted as a space we can enter, but transforms into a series of joined alluring surfaces and modal parts. In this way, Toranzo Jaeger uses the car's mode of assembly to push back against its canonical image. She suggests that the car's fantasy of concealment is only ever accomplished through a tricking out of surfaces and an endless game of expanding perspectives. When segmented, these bodies remain tied to acts of desire, while the car parts flatten without their frame. What thresholds do we cross, what distortions do we perform, to approach them?

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