



Sanya Kantarovsky, *Deprivation*, 2018, oil and watercolor on canvas, 85 x 65".

BASEL

Sanya Kantarovsky

KUNSTHALLE BASEL

Steinenberg 7

August 31 - November 11

A year and a half ago, this institution's director, Elena Filipovic, gave Sanya Kantarovsky carte blanche for a solo exhibition. Twenty paintings and twenty-five monotypes are now being shown in "Disease of the Eyes," a dramaturgically astute show sweeping through five galleries.

Despite the title, on first glance one senses nothing of withdrawal or lack in *Deprivation* (all works 2018), an expressive, large-format painting of a couple locked in a violent embrace, which hangs just to the right of the gallery's entrance. One might think Egon

Schiele or Mike Kelley had inspired Kantarovsky's twosome, who occupy an abstract, planar setting of queasy chartreuse, but the rapid and careless application of paint in thin glazes contradicts our received notions of master painters. Upon closer scrutiny, the figures start to appear ungainly, even gnomically hideous. The man, wearing only a light turquoise-striped shirt, straddles the nude female form, whose crooked arm he handles in a sweeping, overpowering gesture of force. Was it an abandonment of established ideals of beauty that supplied the title?

In the fifth hall is *One World*, an impressive landscape painting of a young woman in an airport waiting area, her body squeezed into the lower block of the canvas as if in a magician's coffin. Behind the window panes, an American Airlines plane is taking off. The figure, isolated and vulnerable, exposes the mission of the Oneworld airline alliance for all its comfortless, neoliberal cynicism. Show Kantarovsky an emblem of hope and he will show you its most lonely, battering interpretation.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.

— Max Glauner

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