

It is weird, really weird, how it is so complicated to talk about what is weird. And yet, today, everyone is talking about it. On Frieze Magazine, 111 results appear as articles that include the word weird in their title, even the other hot magazines of the moment in the art system offer us a non-stop list.

The interesting thing from my perspective is that the term weird condensed in itself other terms: the idea of “magic” supports it as a telamon, “ritual and ceremonial” were systematic words in many different exhibitions. Other terms were:

Spell

Divination

Sorcery

Emulation

Enchantment

Black Magic

White magic

Sortilego

Witches

Incantation

Illusion

Occult

Supernatural

Uncanny

Abnormal

Mysterious

Ghosts and grotesque amongst similar keywords.

Perhaps, at this point, I would prefer it if it were made clear how this long list of words and concepts is used to create formulas to detoxify us from being helpless witnesses to old hierarchical structures.

BUT DOES THE LONG LIST OFFER US
A HYPOTHESIS FOR CHANGE?

Or could it be replaced by a long list of horror films, those that the film genre offered in the 1970s, generating the same effect? In short, in the face of these written lines, one may wonder if the short circuit is intentional, given that we are inside an exhibition entitled *Protozonell: it's weird*.

Its editorial area is a specific space which aims — into another space, the exhibition project itself — to build the time for an investigation, the search for otherness.

As a production space, it collects images and words in all possible stages of their being:

printed,

recorded,

handwritten, in critical form, transcribed, and drawn.

These materials are presented in a plural form, some of them are even duplicated and placed in different areas of the exhibition space in order to abide by the rule of the “good neighbour”.

This formula stipulates that in searching for a particular material, one ends up picking up the one next to it that will turn out to be much more useful than one thought. This dimension of discovery opens at the same time a discourse on the marginal and the search for the alterity.

BUT WHAT IS WEIRD
AND WHAT IS THE NEW WEIRD?

CAN THERE BE A DEFINITION AWAY
FROM FICTION AND NARRATIVE
AND CLOSER TO SOMETHING SIMPLE,
ALMOST ELUSIVE?

CAN SOMETHING OUT OF TIME
BE CONSIDERED WEIRD?

SOMETHING THAT TODAY WE WOULD NEVER SEE
AS PART OF OUR SOCIETY, OUR INSTITUTIONS?

CAN THE WEIRD STILL SURPRISE US
OR BETTER TEACH US TO BUILD A NEW PRAXIS?

Many of these questions may seem innocent to us, but their attempt is nothing more than to shake up a visual typology that has dominated countless exhibition projects over the past few years.

This effort is fuelled by Claire Bishop's recent essay *INFORMATION OVERLOAD* published in the latest issue of *Artforum* in April 2023.

The exercise of recognition to which the author urges us at the beginning of her text leads us to a familiar space, that of research-based art and its possible complications. Until a few years ago, I must admit that the indefatigable nerd that I am, I have felt a sense of open, sensitively touchable pleasure when faced with the endless array of showcases, technical data, documentary videos, letters and ephemera of all kinds. Even today, all these elements still constitute a glimmer of light and contentment for me, but they are increasingly lacking in immediacy.

“IN THE STRONGEST EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH-BASED ART, THE VIEWER IS OFFERED A SIGNAL RATHER THAN NOISE, AN ORIGINAL PROPOSITION FOUNDED ON A CLEAR RESEARCH QUESTION RATHER THAN INCHOATE CURIOSITY. IF THIS SOUNDS LIKE A CRYPTO-ACADEMIC CALL TO APPLY TRADITIONAL RESEARCH CRITERIA TO WORKS OF ART, THEN IT IS, TO AN EXTENT: EARLIER, I DIFFERENTIATED BETWEEN SEARCH AND RESEARCH, AND I UNABASHEDLY PREFER THE LATTER.”

This archive, in fact, wants to show a shadow side of the weird trying to metabolize and shape a new form for its delivery.

This also happens when bringing together pieces of history and documents, we discover that they are far apart and cannot be directly traced back to a common meaning.

There is a work by Max Ernst, with a monstrous aspect and a curious choice of title. It is *EUROPA NACH DEM REGEN* (EUROPE AFTER THE RAIN).

As the painting shows us together with its title, we need a space for silence, to encounter a new form of access to content or gestures enclosed in the space of the project.

Writing, which is a form of silent speech, may constitute an interruption to how the conversation about weirdness is imagined.

In this, the oblique function could be an interesting strategy, “a critique of rectitude” as the theorist and philosopher Adriana Cavarero would say, allowing us to grasp a new access to reading definitions. Perhaps in order to revise the meaning of what is weird we should run along an inclined plane, a space that forces us to awaken human abilities that lie asleep in our psyche. The eye runs along inclined surfaces and the brain is forced to continuously rework the stresses coming from destabilising support.

“The function of the oblique”, the central object of the theory of architect Claude Parent and philosopher Paul Virilio, thus originates as a free hypothesis, without proposing itself as a formal method.

SO LET US LOOK SIDEWAYS.

An inclined self, leaning outwards, is no longer straight, i.e. it hangs over the vertical axis on which it stands and which makes it an autonomous and independent subject because it is balanced on itself.

In this editorial space, narrative lines are knotted and untied, they intertwine and intersect without ever concluding, without ever flowing into an overall plot; it is an almost experimental novel constructed as a series of interrupted incipits that captivate the reader but endlessly divert him towards other plots.