



ROUND TWO

**adversorecto**  
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[Schaden versus Freude]

A project by adversorecto  
Barcelona, 2022

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## Project

The German word «Schadenfreude» means to take pleasure in the misfortune or suffering of others. Today's social and political realities would be nothing without schadenfreude. Group alliances and identities enjoy the feeling of coherence taken from conscious or unconscious exclusions that range from scapegoating the already exploited and marginal to valiantly fighting the powers that be. In the midst of these unifying exclusions, it goes without saying that endeavors to resist this organizing pleasure today entail striving for its apparent opposite: the reversal of its alluring satisfaction into practices of empathy, inclusivity, gratitude, and other noble utopian maneuvers.

Yet what if the latter reformist alternatives prove at some level far more easily said than done? What if these efforts still subtly carry with them the seed of what they strive to transcend (e.g. by «virtue signaling» and the like)? In other words, the impulse behind schadenfreude, not to mention scapegoating, might be more fundamental to the human condition and to the social bond than we would like to acknowledge.

If that claim has any validity, then the task at hand calls for some re-investigation of the relation between enjoyment and misfortune, and by extension, between desire and trauma. And yet perhaps what is at stake first and foremost is not the misfortune or trauma of the other but instead one's own trauma, a trauma that is the foundation of all individual and collective subjectivity, which the feeling of schadenfreude seeks in vain to assuage and resolve.

The body of artwork we are presenting here explores unexpected overlaps between misfortune or disturbance and enjoyment or desire. Utilizing diverse approaches and mediums, the ten artworks turn inside out the self-appeasing structure of schadenfreude to glimpse an emergent desire within a twofold confrontation: one, within the traumatic experience in oneself that one seeks to evade and two, within the unknowable, inviolable dimension in the other.

The ten works comprise four interrelated expanded paintings, two wall paintings linked with a piece of short fiction (in audio-recording and printed text), a booklet that reads in four directions, and three single-channel and installation videos. The following pages provide more details about each work.

[Schaden]

*Agony*

Video/sound projected onto five painted polyester film panels (110 x 300 cm)

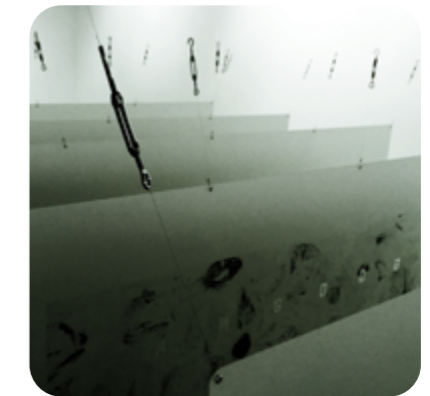
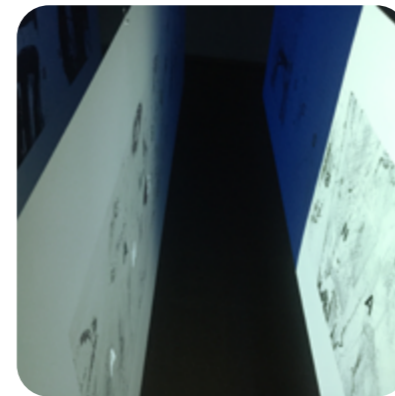
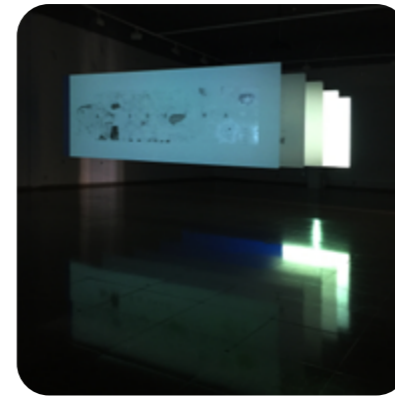
10 min loop

Preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=os6Qxgz-K4k>

Doesn't the feeling of agony always start with two points in a weird calculus of time? The first point plots the location at which you're moving irreversibly forward, and the second where it will all finally come to an end. But how does one arrive at the moment of relief or satisfaction? Like a person falling from a skyscraper or strangers falling in love.



Agony, selected views



[Freude]



*Done, out of love*

Single-channel video  
10 mins

How do desire and trauma strangely intermingle? Surely, the ways are many. Here, a figure lies on the raw wood floor of a vacant garret reciting his affections for an absent beloved. The extended declaration of unconditional love goes terribly awry.



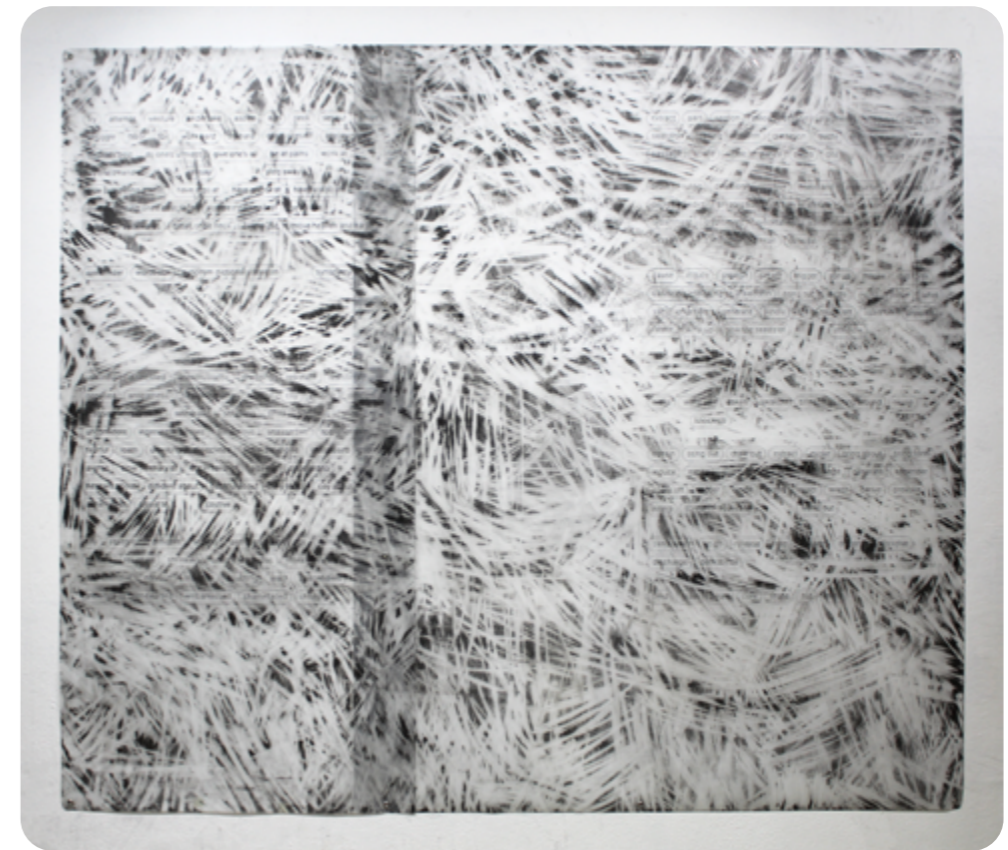
[Schaden]



*Franela*

Two paintings  
Graphite on polyester film  
138 x 163 cm, each

How do the constraints of a lexicon enable us to express what goes beyond words? Two paintings are woven out of a treasure trove of synonyms and antonyms.



[Freude]

*A door that doesn't close properly*

Audio recording with printed text  
30 mins

How does a vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms impose its will on a narrative? The story tells a tale of two roommates with opposite attitudes toward the inescapable entry into reality through language.

... even if as me  
ep itself. In this dream,  
ine table's under-surface  
oth of its hollow.  
  
«People are ghosts turning

...sterning  
joyment  
ite. The  
nted the  
e other then  
ndational  
lea of table,  
ent from itself,  
ed one more  
  
n the pedestrian  
  
0  
Their boredom is not even theirs.  
  
1  
Through it all, the one and the  
inseparable places, one osten  
perpetual motion. Discharge  
ne demobilized – the one  
or even to tak  
tor, jum



[Schaden]

*4 bar 4 (4|4)*

Four paintings with corresponding benches

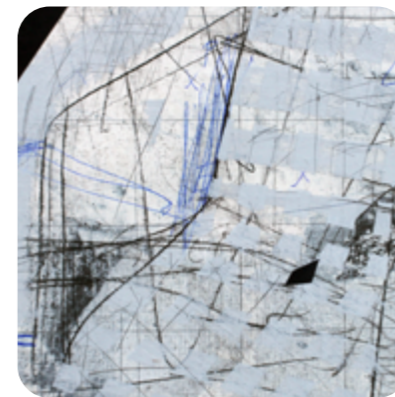
130 x 130 x 3 cm / 37 x 37 x 41 cm

Prussian blue ftalo on linen

What is the proper distance from which to view the trauma of others? Out of a widely publicized tragedy, these expanded paintings present an elaborate set of associational traces showing a distance in space and time from the suffering and loss that inspired this creation.



4 bar 4 (4|4), selected views



[Freude]

*Repetition*

Video installation  
5 min loop

What happens to the power of words when we repeat our attempts to capture a trauma?  
Five improvised testimonies of an enduring past disturbance are repeated in this exploration  
of repetition and the retroactivity of putting words to suffering that resists description.



[Schaden/Freude]



*L'Auca d'en Félix*

Booklet/video  
1 min loop

What if a book is structured simultaneously in multiple orientations? How to read it? A video shows hands turning both the pages and the orientation of a booklet that asks the reader to experience its texts and images in four directions. A tribute to Felix Gonzalez-Torres.



## **Adversorecto**

Adversorecto is an artist collective based in Barcelona, Spain, founded in 2020 by Peter Freund and Werner Thöni.

There is no single correct procedure for the artist collective to follow. There are two: All or nothing. One and zero. Verso not recto. Practice despite theory. Word but image. Sight as blindness. Finish unless started. It began two years ago between two Barcelona-based artists, non-native outsiders Peter Freund and Werner Thöni. The pair met at sunrise (or was it sunset?) – anyway on the cusp of light and dark to live (and die?) in creating artistic projects out of their opposite tendencies happily ever after.

Peter Freund

Born in California, USA.

Graduated in Literature/Theory, University of California Berkeley (AB) and the State University of New York Buffalo (PhD). Doctoral thesis on interdisciplinary art practices sprung from the impossibility of language.

Solo and group shows in the USA, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Russia, Asia, and the Middle East. Among others: Les Rencontres Internationales, Berlin, Paris+ / Videonale, Bonn / Sazmanab Center for Contemporary Art, Tehran / Other Cinema, San Francisco / Black Maria Film Festival, New Jersey / Xcèntric, CCCB, Barcelona / Festival of (In)appropriation, Los Angeles, London+ / Antimatter, Victoria BC / Sydney Underground FF / Chicago Underground FF / Museo de Arte (La BLAA), Bogotá / SMC Museum of Art, Moraga.

Recent curatorial/editorial projects: Xcèntric, CCCB; A\*Desk: Critical Thinking, Barcelona.

(Full) Professor of Art, Saint Mary's College of California (on leave); Resident Artist, University of Barcelona.

Founding member of Adversorecto.

Lives and works in Barcelona, Spain.

Werner Thöni

Born in Thun, Switzerland.

Graduated in Teaching and Special Education, Lehrerseminar Spiez and University of Fribourg.

Solo and group shows in Switzerland, Spain and Japan. Among others: Leonart Gallery, Basel / Aquatinta Gallery, Lenzburg / Kultur im Stab, Arisdorf / Art-Forum Petit Pont, Lyss / Casa Cultural Galileo, Madrid / Galeria Contrast, Barcelona / University of Barcelona UB, Faculty of Fine Arts, Barcelona / Can Xalant, Center for Contemporary Creation and Thought, Mataró / Brocken Gallery, Tokyo.

Illustration of books and magazines, published by: Editions La Galera / Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat / Pirene Editorial / Editorial Cruilla / Malinka Libros / Associació de Mestres Rosa Sensat.

Founding Director of Werner Thöni Artspace.

Founding member of Adversorecto.

Lives and works in Barcelona, Spain.

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