

rebound & reflection

Act I : Narcissus

1 & 6 : Luise Lotzing Lichteinfall

photography, light box | 56x52,5x7cm | 2022

Traumspiegelung

photography, light box | 24,3x21,3x7cm | 2022

Looking at the two photography works, nature's beauty in contrast with human intervention is brought before the eyes. Interwoven plants, glimmering lights and soft colors - natural beauty stands in harsh contrast with decaying human traces. The works show nature as an ever-existing entity and man as a transient, gradually dissolving entity. We see ourselves in the forest, between trees and by the water, becoming a part of nature. However, at the same time, the reflective surface of the water reminds us of our human, perishable existence. The two works by artist Louise Lotzing and their juxtaposition of decay and the representation of the timeless lend a pensive note to the narrative surrounding Narcissus.

2: Vivian Tseng Blood and sweat

Acrylic on wooden board with red rhinestone details | 8cm x 15cm | 2021

This delicate painting refers to the feeling of passion and the bitterness that it entails. The artist states that in order to maintain a passion, hard work and dedication are essential and that beauty does not come without sweat and persistence.

3: Adam Meszaros Untitled

Oil on Canvas | 30x20cm | 2022

This painting revolves around the condition of being caught up in a specific state of mind or with an idea of something, but being unable or reluctant to let go of it. In his work, the artist Adam Meszaros illustrates a mentally extremely stressful situation. The face is painted in a meticulous manner and fills up the entire canvas - leaving no space for anything or anyone else and drawing the viewer's full attention only onto itself. It is strongly reminiscent of a pending physical suffering, as is the case with a severe headache. The person depicted is deeply indulged in their own state of mind, but refuses to rethink it or consider a different take on it, even though it's a dead end and will eventually lead to their own self destruction. This high tension situation leading to self-destruction, can be seen as a parallel to Narcissus, who, before he perishes, is also confined by his own thoughts.

4: Silvano Derungs Echo und Narziss

Ink on Paper | 30x21cm | 2022

In his "transautomatic" ink drawings, as he calls them himself, Silvano Derungs wants to allude to the narrative myth and the often accompanying antique imagery. The work, with its variety of forms, is intended to encourage free association with symbolism of ancient objects in mythological narratives. The black shapes suggest different figurative elements, but not every one of them is instantly recognisable. Instead, it is the artist's intention to leave

space for viewers to make their own interpretations. The ink drawings and the whitespace can be understood as a kind of broken mirror, reflecting the individual spectator's personal associations.

5 & 10: Barbara Tunkowitsch Midnight Blue (Bouquet)

Acrylic on canvas | 40x40 | 2021

Midnight Blue (Bouquet) is a painting about distance and closeness, showing a figure behind a bouquet of flowers. It is a gift or part of a ceremony, tender and withdrawn, hiding behind the fragrance and the opulence of the blossoms. The flowers etch a shadow into the figure in the background, maybe leaving a permanent mark, similar to an imprint of a memory.

(XVII)

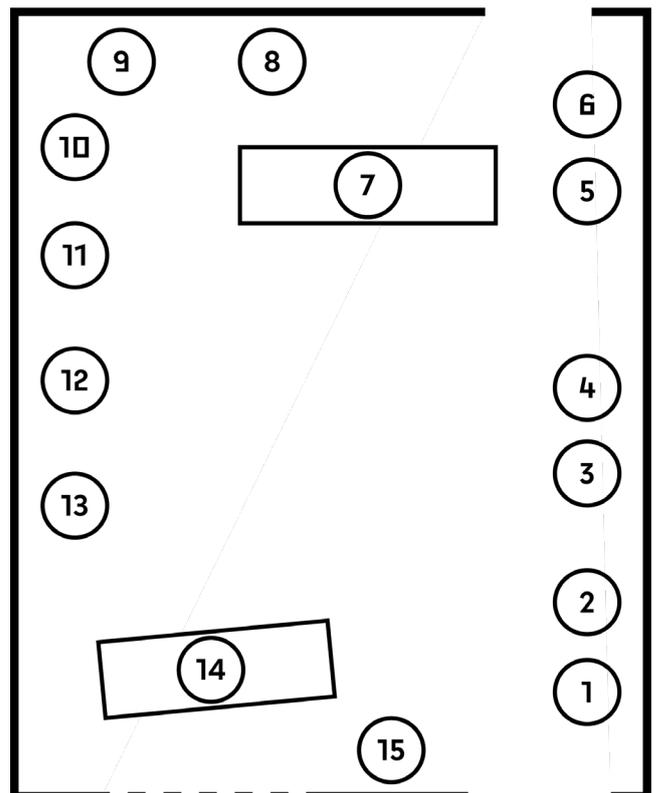
Oil crayon and pencil on ceramics | 5x10 | 2021

(XVII) is a ceramic piece inspired by the tarot card „The Star“. It displays an act of balance, of being roated and leaping forth at the same time. One foot in the water, the other one on the ground the figure is holding its position, like dancing on a tightrope. Thus she is the opposite of Narcissus, who tilts into his self-portrait reflected in the water, physically and mentally. The depicted figure seems to be in a similar predicament as Narcissus, but retains inner balance.

7: Nayeun Park und Manuel Horak reflecting pond

Mixed Media | 129x50x18 | 2021

This piece by Nayeun Park and Manuel Horak, consisting of a mirror, lined with naturalistic elements such as stones and greenery, represents the pond as a particularly mystical, perhaps even enchanted place. Apart from the environmental importance of the pond, the calm, smooth surface of the body of water and its reflective surface has an important role in many tales and mythological stories. The piece transforms a mirror, which is an everyday



object that is artificially manufactured, into a naturalistic sculpture, masquerading as a biotope. The pond and its reflection function as a key point in the mythological tale of Narcissus. This is the place, where he falls so madly in love with his own reflection, that he forgets his surroundings and finally perishes of starvation. Similar to its fatal role in narcissus' story, the mirror occupies a particularly ambivalent role in society. It can encourage extremes, such as exaggerated self-criticism or a vanity-driven self-obsession.

8: Merlin Dickie **Narziss**

Oil on Canvas | 23x30cm | 2022

Merlin Dickie lends a surrealist pictorial language to the usual classicistic representation of the figures Echo and Narcissus. The artist calls „self-destruction through excess“ the supreme goal and ideal of our modern society and perceives Narcissus as a personified exemplification of a society that strives for wealth and recognition. Get rich, make the world your audience and preemptively satisfy any need that might arise. Narcissus would do well in a social media environment. A QR-Code mounted above the painting shows, when scanned, the second related work Echo. The two works stand in contrast, but also complete each other. In this two-part work, the artist draws a parallel from the mythological story of Echo and Narcissus to the Social Media Landscape. The artist compares the two mythological characters to the social media phenomenon of the relation between the celebrity content creator, who depends on continuous positive stimulation and the follower, who becomes a disregarded medium, an amplifier to the thing or person they love. Echo and Narcissus are not only characters in a narrative, but are also used as vivid examples and, at the same time, as personified symptoms of a superficial society.

9: Miryana Sarandeva **God bless the grass**

Linocut Print 30x42

This observation of Stephen King's Lawnmower Man examines self-damaging behavior to the extent of gratifying it and follows the manner in which the act of wrongdoing stimulates the senses. The grass goes in, green juice comes out. Ultimately the sheer look of it all proves to be as satisfying as the act itself. The artist's depiction of this short story draws not only a direct visual parallel to the story of Narcissus, but it also shows a figure so trapped in its own distortion, that it is unreachable.

11: Sophie Schagerl **first time eating fish in a long time**

oil on canvas | 40x30cm | 2022

This work shows an attempt at approaching a situation of dialogue between personas that do not share an initial set of thoughts. Trying to get along often means trying to become alike, adapting to and imitating each other. This work references the fateful moment, when Narcissus' and Echo's paths first meet. The moment that sealed both their tragic fortunes. Visually, the green figure in the foreground can be interpreted as Narcissus in his weakest, final hours of his existence, slowly becoming roared to the grass. The figures around him could be interpreted as spurned lovers who pray on his almost lifeless body.

12: Simon Kubik

the idealplay ground

Oil on Canvas | 80x100cm | 2021

When we look at this painting, we enter an artificial world, where nature and environment still exist, but are already dissolving into the masses of people crowding the scene. Alternative realities replace the real world. In Simon Kubik's painting, the individuals are already following the trend of completely surrendering to an artificial world and immortalizing themselves on the Internet in the process, resisting the decay of the world around them. The idealplay ground is an allusion to the virtual spaces of social media and disenchant the scenario of a world of unlimited possibilities. The metaverse, as announced by Mark Zuckerberg, for example, is still met with skepticism by many.

13: Jana Forster **Spex 1**

Oil on Canvas | 2021 | 40x40 cm

Animals and humans who live in close proximity, tend to adapt to each other. This assimilation makes certain behaviors of the animal recognizable and thus humanizes it. In Jana Forster's work, a cat is drinking water from the lid of the plastic box. As it drinks, it seemingly gazes at its own reflection on the smooth surface. Known as one of the more complex and proud animals, we attribute human vanity to feline species. By depicting a cat that is merely following its natural instincts, the artist visually references the iconography of Narcissus contemplating himself in the water mirror.

14: Monika Ernst **Lie with Narcissus**

interactive sculpture, paper mirror and metal | 130x90cm | 2022

This interactive sculpture invites the spectator to lie down on the soft leaf and gaze at his reflection in the pistil of the narcissus flower. Laying down and being face to face with Narcissus generates a feeling of common ground. What must he have felt? This work humorously imagines narcissus after his metamorphosis and gives us a chance to comfortably contemplate our own egoistic and narcissistic tendencies.

15: Silvia Knoedlstorfer **Selvie**

Ink on wood | 2019 | 42x30cm

The theme of the longing for self-representation, which in most cases is associated with social media, is very present in Silvia Knödlstorfer's work. The optical retouching or „self-optimization“ through filters and special altering software tools hints both at the fixation on one's own identity and its appearance, and at the blurring out of one's surroundings, which directly references Narcissus' role in Ovid's story. The practice of self-staging, which has been prevalent in social media for some time, could certainly be attributed to narcissistic motives. However, other factors, such as the presence of social constraints, as well as group dynamics, heavily influence the social media landscape. With the technique of ink on wood and its washed-out, merging colors, the artist reveals the possible personal insecurities that accompany the polished online presence.