



Lately secularization has been on my mind a lot. I live in Berlin. Germany. Christianity was a stable staple of my upbringing. Catholicism to be precise. West Germany was founded on its rehabilitation. And founded everybody's rehabilitation on it. It stuck. Not just here. Crusades, Colonizations had taken off in the thirteenth century. Scattering Christianity across the known world since, what has been passed on passes on back and forth endlessly in mutations, permutations, anomalies, and variants. Secularization is the name of the variant that caught us here, European nation building's pride and joy. Secularization is the name under which Christianity sedimented into modern state form; into nation form. Into our time. Here. The Christian church went on to exist as a ritualistic double of the state that performs its capital form. Crusades too. Secularization has recently been rejuvenated as the name for Christianity going viral. Modern Belief. The belief that makes modern. The belief that spells out who isn't. Modern. Enough. Ever.

I am starting from Christianity, because the painterly forms Frieda Toranzo Jaeger calls upon originate from its mutating histories of adoration. This is Christian painting in anomalies. Variants of viral altar painting. Variants of permuted devotional painting. Heretically. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's work is adapting provincial livework as inherent to international art. In other words: what has been capitalized into folklore becomes senseless only where it is arrested in its reification. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger breaks its elements out

in which the past is habitually called upon for its utopian horizons. In which the future darkens out of it. So her reaching for futurities, her viral machines, make all the Symbolist sense in the world. The present is perfectly understood as being absolute unacceptable. Beyond painterly enforcement. There is a Christian skeleton called fascism living on this grass. In front of it an icon of senselessness. But the grass is green and it's not raining frogs but unicorns.

The precision of where to move into sloppy, of where to make color flat and lines unfinished appeals to me in Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's work. It is full of affirmations. Beloved references. Projected desires. Stop. Here is a disagreement. Desires are everywhere. I am not their biggest fan. I prefer needs. I am aware that needs are said to be basic. But have they ever been? For whom? Unbasic needs are shared utopian registers. Desires to me always seem like the psychoanalytic crutches that make the proprietarian subject (me as much as her or you) forget to want with others. Still. This is no hermeneutic art. So, if Psychoanalysis is unavoidable needful reading would include Jean Laplanche but not Jacques Lacan. Also Lenora Hanson. Definitely Lenora Hanson. I do write that Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's work is not hermeneutical because its mutualities make its machines perpetually upended. See the hinges. See the uncontained frames. There is no pretense of containment here. There are notations on the flipsides. Travelling shrines function like outsized illumi-

of this arrest and thereby demonstrates in how far modern painting itself could easily qualify for being reified, for being folklore. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger spins its lifeworks anew. Owing to where she grew up. Owing to where she studied. Owing to where she lives. I am here for it. I do believe the provincialism of variants makes Christian capital embarrassing. Frivolous. Hers. Mine. Yours. That is of course only if one is not prone to passing one's homegrown variant as the whole world's history. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger is not. Her provincialism moves by self-implication. Because of this directedness. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's self-exposure as an overall folklorist who offers moveable murals makes her something of an itinerant evangelist, a travelling saleswoman of heretic fables. Her triptychs follow metamorphic tendencies. Their centers do not offer repose but trapdoors. They open, and each limp that falls into them gets its own hinge, its own devotional attention. Broken hearts. Broken machines. They are mended in Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's panels, they are carved out. The embroidery she stitches into her canvasses with the help of her family, hereditarily, materially, they mark adoration enigmata. But this is not a world transgressed by Christianity. All is inverted. An invert's art. Everything here is transgressed: the hearts, the cars, the machines, the good, the bad, the viral... Frieda Toranzo

nated manuscripts. Annotated scriptures. Reminders of us littering the future. There is no consistent promise here. Only a practice of transgressed devotional bodies. A demonstration of devotional lives to be lived. Maybe machinic. Definitely obscene. Struggling. And I just repeated the name Frieda Toranzo Jaeger 16 times within 1161 words. Aligning devotional practice.

Jaeger stages devotional part objects. Christianity is transgressed. And shall be. No consistently embodied shapes, objects, but interiors with exteriors, ornaments with use, adoration wreckage. Colonizations past and present imprint. They are all incontinent. *Undicht*. They can't hold it all in. They don't really close. The shrines of Frieda Toranzo Jaeger. All are leaking. Offerings. Often unelegant.

But. Their outlines are very often very elegant: the machines, the personage. Here, the machinic personage. Devotionally recommended readings include: Georges Bataille, Priyamvada Gopal, Donna V. Jones and Gilbert Simondon. Fascism, Modernism, Vitalism, Machinism. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's double-sided altar serves those, with love. I know that sounds bad. But it only does if you think of love in its Romantic nationalization: a party of proprietarian two. A European stateliness of binary reproduction. Don't. Think of the other one the mutation of Christian love into communal sense. Revolutionary Love. In Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's case all held by cheap hinges and feeble wood beams. The material of her painting's crutches that allow the works off the walls, travelling, opening into the space in front of them, hanging from the ceiling, lurking in the corners, lying on the floors. There are so many hinges.

Mutating triptychs all over. So many crutches. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's hearts are made of predetermined breaking points. As are her machines. Her shrines. They shall break. Open. They proceed by self-transgression. Only the embroidery survives. Bodies in cushions. Their delivery is meticulous. Yes. I read it everywhere. But I do not see Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's works aiming at perfected surfaces. They are crafted. Yes. They show her skills. Yes. But they also demonstrate where she loses interest in impregnating her surfaces into finalized devotions. I do see symbolism. And that word too follows her everywhere.

Let me be clear: Symbolism is not good art. It never was. I love Symbolism. The statuary of one of my favorite questionable Symbolist groups, the Salon de Rose + Croix, which held yearly shows in Paris from 1892 to 1897, stated very clearly, that works would be accepted for the exhibition if they matched its ideals, if they were decidedly nonidentical to the contemporary world. Quality was secondary. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger demonstrates just that. And she demonstrates a tiny bit more. She demonstrates her education. Her aptitude for quality. Only to then discard it into Symbolisms. Yes one can totally see Henri Rousseau in this. And sure there is Diego Rivera all over. But let me overstate once more: This is devotional painting Accumulations of adoration wreckage. And those Rosicrucians were turning towards the past as a mythical utopian horizon. The future had just become progress in theirs. The past darkened out of it. Frieda Toranzo Jaeger lives in a time

# FRIEDA TORANZO JAEGER

## SURFACE INTELLIGENCE

### THE EXHIBITION PROGRAM: OSLO

The exhibition *Surface Intelligence* is the fifth in Den Frie's OSLO series, which presents solo exhibitions by Danish and international artists created specifically for Den Frie. The OSLO programme continues Den Frie's legacy as an artists' house, with a long tradition of curating exhibitions and developing new works in close collaboration with artists. The OSLO exhibitions are held in Den Frie's lower gallery, with three exhibitions produced each year. Artists who have previously exhibited in OSLO include Atiëna R. Kilfa, Will Benedict & Steffen Jørgensen, Amy O'Neill, and Sian Kristoffersen. The name OSLO refers both to Den Frie's location at Oslo Plads and to the word "solo," of which it is an anagram. Admission to OSLO is always free.

### FRIEDA TORANZO JAEGER

Born 1988, lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico. She studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg.

### COLOPHON

SURFACE INTELLIGENCE  
Frieda Toranzo Jaeger

DEN FRIE Udstillingsbygning  
10.10.25 — 11.01.26

CURATOR  
Magnus Thorø Clausen

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TEXT  
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TRANSLATION  
Magnus Thorø Clausen

Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's new works are commissioned by Den Frie

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