

## Slipping Glimpses

E. M. C. Collard und Michael Groz  
Ausstellungshalle 1A  
Schulstraße 1A  
60594 Frankfurt am Main

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Öffnungszeiten: Mi, Do, 18 - 20 Uhr, Fr, Sa, So, 14 - 18 Uhr

Taking its title from Willem de Kooning's notion of "slipping glimpses," the exhibition brings together a series of paintings by Frankfurt-based artist E. M. C. Collard alongside drawings and paintings by British artist Michael Groz. Although distinct in their approaches, both artists share a similar interest in challenging perception, exploration of form, and the fleeting nature of visual encounters.

Frankfurt-born artist E. M. C. Collard shows a selection of paintings depicting close-ups of plant and floral motifs. The answer to the question of what drives the artist's fascination with these subjects is apparent in her statement that: "A good piece of art should be both immediately accessible and, at the same time, possess an enigmatic and profound side that can engage the viewer for a long time."

While providing an accessibility point, these plant motifs allow Collard enough leeway for exploring ways of perception. By zooming in on the object and granting it a much larger manifestation than it has in nature, she foregrounds the form so that any semblance of its environment is cropped off, leaving no surrounding in sight to threaten or marginalize it. Magnified to this degree, the subject becomes deeply susceptible to close examination.

Her treatment of details, stamens, anthers, stigmas, tendrils, vines, and petals, while holding many features one finds in nature, simultaneously merges into almost anthropomorphic forms, creating absurdist scenarios. They become visceral as a hint of flesh or a tongue immerses itself within the flowers, triggering a seamless blend where both worlds intertwine into something that feels uniquely alive. There is something quite captivating in a subject drawn from real life, filtered through or exaggerated with human characteristics, that is able to sustain a form that bears qualities of both. Here, the general dualism between realism and abstraction gives way to an art stretched between nature and speculative research. Light, color, contrast, brushwork, surface, depth, and the shift between different perspectives are all carefully calculated to balance out artifice and nature.

This is exemplified across several works in the exhibition. In the painting *forestflower-frontal*, rendered in saturated, artificial pinks and deep crimsons, Collard transforms the anatomy of the bloom's center into something that is unusually anthropomorphic. A similar ambiguity is

carried through the texturally dense work *roots and lichen*, which features an interlocking network of thick, winding roots that snake across the surface in earthy tones of ochre and dark brown. In *conker tree after the rain*, the artist utilizes a muted, almost monochromatic palette to depict an oversized cluster of blossoms. Much like *petals*, which relies on yellow, gray, and white, the composition hinges on a dramatic shift in depth, where the foreground and background contrast sharpness with a soft, photographic blur. Finally, in *heart of glass noodles*, a silver, metallic structure dominates the frame against a vibrant gradient background; its bulbous, translucent forms mimic both organic plant nodes and the synthetically evocative, slippery texture of glass noodles.

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Serving as his debut presentation in Germany, the exhibition introduces Groz's work to the Frankfurt public through a curated selection of drawings and paintings. His exploration of landscape, portraiture, and intricate compositions on paper explores degrees of mutability of form as rocky escarpments, fragments of historical painting, and semi-pointillistic drawings seething with activity continuously dissolve and reform. Informed by art history and driven by a keen interest in exploring how form emerges through the artistic process, the selection of works in the exhibition provides a well-rounded insight into Groz's practice.

Groz' paintings titled *The Landed Andrews* recreate the pastoral portraiture of Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews* (c. 1750), a work originally made as a social standing testament. In Groz's two treatments, this bountiful domestic tableau undergoes a distinct corruption. This transformation intensifies in the second version; rather than focusing on the hyperbole of one's public image, the artist turns to excavating the raw forms and internal architecture that buttress the painting. While Gainsborough's original stands as a prime example of manipulating one's image for posterity, Groz's exposed, bare-bones compositions completely disrupt this legacy.

Another painting features a deep black background out of which a lineup of figures struggle to well up on the surface, which is further confused with jarring slashes of red and white chalk. It seems like a painting of a particular memory one has lived through that is on the brink of being remembered but harshly resisting the process. Figures overlap and blur in a state of friction or collective motion, recalling early 20th-century expressionist theater or street scenes, where individual identity is subsumed by an overarching visceral energy.

What the figurative paintings introduce as moments of memory fraud, Groz's landscapes further explore through the volatility of the permanence of form. The exhibition features a series of landscapes, including Joshua Park vistas that appear in a repetitive manner. While at first glance these images evoke something ancient in a Romanticist manner, or suggest an Impressionist-like sensibility for repetition and the search for capturing a moment, the driving factor here lies in a fascination with the fleeting impressions stemming from one's own conscious or half-conscious experience.

In other landscapes, the pursuit of constructing form by relying on the fleeting is even more pronounced, manifesting as a structural corruption that leans toward pointillism, holding the image in a state of memory that is either permanently lost or on the brink of resolution. Here, a coastal vista unfolds, where a dense, vertical field of acidic green gives way to a chalky shoreline and an intense, deep blue sea. Looming above is a hillside rendered in violent,

arterial streaks of crimson and rust. The use of unnatural, acidic greens placed against heavy, arterial streaks of crimson and rust-colored earth feels less like a quiet meditation and more like a profound disruption. This particular work seems to be adequately complemented by a description from Groz's short story where he says: "Around the cove there are rocky out-crops forming futuristic shapes and caves, covered in a thick layer of burnt red earth." (From *Beach Burn Blues*)

Groz's works on paper could also benefit from being prefaced by another quote that reads: "It is an ancient mode, as old as art itself, and as ancient as civilization, scratching and tracing into the textures of the abundance." (From *Age of Can*). The works on paper introduce a wide range of subjects, from architecture and macro-perceptions of the natural world, to landscapes and figures emerging from cross-hatching and dense, semi-pointillistic linework that reaches a point of saturation, merging space and subject. Here, the subject becomes a rich archive of its own making, keeping visible the full labor embedded within the surfaces. These works, too, explore in unexpected ways the instability of memory and set histories. In the drawings, due to their expressive approach, Groz intentionally traffics this motivator into a search for form that favors process over permanence. He describes this approach in the following manner:

*The transformation occurs by seeking the structure beneath the literal appearance, and then something else that is more expressive, such as a falling figure or an eerie rider at night, recalling a particular place, and indeed the ambience or atmosphere as it becomes a memory. (...) It is always trial and error, scratching and rubbing out, reworking the image, until such ambiguities are resolved through the process of distilling an image into paint.*

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Ultimately, both artists share an interest in reordering the familiar. Where Collard's works consciously subvert our preconceptions of the traditional floral motif by turning it completely on its head, Groz abandons the concrete to embrace the inherent instability of perception. Resting on the volatility of memory and relying on the unexpected resolution of uncanny pairings, their distinct practices find a shared fascination in the mechanics of representation. Though operating from different points of focus, Groz and Collard both explore the ways in which an image can remain startlingly visceral, even when it is suspended in unstable territory.

Kristina Sedlarević and Mark Dickenson