

BERLIN

Klára Hosnedlová

KRAUPA-TUSKANY ZEIDLER

Various frames of reference, from art history to fashion, theater to architecture, feminism to science fiction, structured Klára Hosnedlová's refreshing exhibition "Nest," all contributing to an overall sense of the gallery's transformation into a retro-futuristic, period-drama, high-fashion stage set. One way to think through the composition of the show was to take a hint from Hosnedlová's embroidered "paintings" (all works *Untitled, from the series Nest*, 2020). Several depicted people using a magnifying glass to enlarge details—a fingernail being cleaned with a sharp metal implement, say, or a stiletto heel, or enigmatic cell-phone screens zoomed in on something like teeth. Going from micro to macro meant starting with the cotton threads making up these works. Singly visible to the naked eye up close, they vanished into illusionism as soon as you stepped back. The impression of photo-realism with a 'gram filter must be connected to these works' source images: cropped details of photographs taken at a location shoot staged at Ještěd Tower, near Liberec in the Czech Republic. This paragon of Eastern Bloc

utopian modernism served as a conceptual backdrop and inspiration for the exhibition; the brownish flutes of a floor-to-ceiling light fitting in the middle of the gallery were an homage to its interior. Like Berlin's contemporaneous Fernsehturm, the tower is a symbol of the exuberant, almost psychedelic second flowering of socialist optimism that came to an abrupt end with the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968.

That's one fast route from A to B through history and geography—a bit too fast. A Czech critic has spoken of Hosnedlová's exhibitions as "visual situations," and this description seems apt: Most of the embroideries were mounted on terrazzo formed into the shape of squished insulation panels, which were in turn embedded in large cement-gray tile ele-



Klára Hosnedlová,
Untitled (from the series Nest), 2020,
cotton thread,
stainless steel,
21 1/4 x 16 1/2".

ments with wide, smooth grooves into which frosted-glass elliptical disks were lodged. The gallery's main space also contained a large metal sink with idiosyncratic mismatched legs, surrounded by glass water puddles, at once evoking open-plan interior design, a science lab, and a restaurant kitchen. Inside the sink were cultivated reishi mushrooms—aka the plant of immortality—conjuring ancient healing traditions and bringing into play the hobby du jour of an art world without parties to go to.

Entering the rear gallery involved walking around the back of an expansive curved room divider. Behind it was an opulent green-leather couch facing a single embroidered painting of a hairless Sphinx cat that looked straight at you—into your eyes—from its perch on someone's shoulder. The couch and architectural intervention created a mise-en-scène comparable to that of the XXL soft Brutalist frames, but one that was more explicitly spatial and invited the viewer in, offering a place, perhaps, to rest.

A performance around the time of the opening, organized not for a public audience but to be documented, which might be to say primarily for Instagram, featured two performers wearing black body-mold costumes that left some flesh exposed. Aided by a live moth that was color-coordinated with the mushrooms, they used the space scenographically, as if for a fashion shoot. The event highlighted the idea of the exhibition as a kind of mood board with lots of context and affect—content, if you will—but no plot as such, other than its own carefully controlled orchestration.

Hosnedlová's attention to detail, as the cue of the magnifying glasses suggested, carried through every aspect of the show. A stack of posters was accompanied by matching elastic bands the color of concrete. As if to advertise a forgotten sci-fi film with the exhibition's title, a photograph showed the cast of the paintings' source images in character, in costume, and on location in the Ještěd Tower—in another time and space, another world. The point was that each of these contexts—from Instagram to Eastern Bloc modernism to the proximity to cinema or fashion—stood in ever-changing relation to the others in a performative intertwining of the trajectories of historically deferred or vicarious desire.

—Alexander Scrimgeour