Modern Painting

at BBBerlin

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* *Books aren’t about ‘real life.’ Books are about other books.*

Marriage Plot by Jeffrey Eugenides

Goddess is a 1,5 m half-sphere with a print of the ceiling in Jesuitenkirche, in Vienna. The print depicts a dome, which is however a trompe-l’œil painting by Andrea Pozzo, done on an almost flat surface.

Modern Paintings are scans of extracted colors printed on silk. One of Modern Paintings shows orange, of easyJet’s logo, and a greenish color—the most dominant tone in The Luncheon on the Grass, painted by Édouard Manet, entangled together. In the other Modern Painting, a blue and yellow strip—Lufthansa’s logo—is tied together with the tone of Olympia’s body, painted also by Manet, and the dominant color of nudes painted by Lucian Freud.

There is something about airplanes, and Europe and modernism. As if planes still carry some of that idealistic spirit of progress, even though we know now they’re bad for the environment. As if the fact that most people don’t understand how they operate, and yet trust the technology and the staff to transport them safely, can be brought in relation with the paintings which have been canonized to the point of stardom, while also being carnal, and ambiguously sexist and progressive. It all has a certain patina of nostalgia, and passed glory, and randomness. Manet was quite the shocker. In his time. Airplanes were such a luxury, in their time. Today, we see so many images, all the time.

The trompe-l’œil ceiling in Jesuitenkirche works only if looked at from the entrance. A photograph of it stretched over a big half-sphere renders the sculpture a huge protruding image. A 3D image? I guess that’s important for me to say, because I still can’t believe that I’m making sculptures.

I am not sure why I am so fascinated with the question: what is even reality? And even more: why would anyone try to reproduce it? Once I talked to a friend, and she said it might be because it reveals the absurdity of existence and the need to go on. If so—in order to make sense of existence and to find beauty in it, reality has to be recreated with detail and precision.

* Julija Zaharijević