

EXPOCHGO19

# THE SEEN

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ART SEEN: INTERNATIONAL

## TOURISM, IN PASSING

### A SERIES OF VIGNETTES

By Naoki Sutter-Shudo



WE MIGHT NEVER AGAIN LIVE IN A WORLD WITH A REAL BELIEF IN PERMANENCE. THE ADVENT OF THERMODYNAMICS AND ITS ACCOMPANYING CONCEPT OF ENTROPY, HAS GIVEN US THE MODERN KNOWLEDGE THAT CHAOS UNAVOIDABLY PREVAILS. NO SYSTEM IS STABLE. STILL-LIFE PAINTINGS, BASED ON ACTUAL WITNESSED SCENES— WHETHER SEEN LIVE OR PHOTOGRAPHED—PRETEND TO POSSESS THIS AIR OF PERMANENCE, AS THEY FIX A FLEETING MOMENT DOWN ONTO CANVAS, PANEL, OR PAPER. FLIRTING WITH REALISM, YET NEVER FULLY COMMITTING TO IT, FIVE OF SUCH WORKS INVITE TALES OF SPECULATIVE SIGHT-SEEING.

## ALAN MICHAEL, *TRAIN IN THE SNOW*

The spongey piece of bread, riddled with holes, seems to scream out its refusal to be consumed; this is not what the man imagined when his wife asked if he wanted toast. The bizarre food is called a crumpet: in between a pancake and a muffin, its vile design appears as an aberration. Certainly, it is incomprehensible how anyone would choose it over the myriad of bread types in the history of humanity. He thinks very strongly he does not want to eat it, and it strikes him that the situation is one with no winner. However, filling the crumpet's pores with jam muffles its pleas of not wanting to be eaten; it is quite good in the end. At least this ridiculous little bread has a firm stance on its destiny as food, whereas most have no opinion. A stance of refusal that beautifully aligns with that of this man. In contrast, he does not even notice the little birds on the branches outside of his windows: they sing, but not about wanting or not wanting to be eaten; in fact, he does not think of them as food, neither do they consider themselves edible. Sometimes, the man eats, with great satisfaction, that which wants to be eaten. Gustatory advertisements whisper to him, and yell in many voices—the man recognizes and chooses the one that knows his tone and mirrors it. The man could go for some hearty piece of meat, one echoing the diet of its living origin—like acorns fed to pigs, like good grass fed to a cow, coming through with boldness, from a dry aged beefsteak. Add to that little shallots, and a reliable red wine. And evidently, potatoes. What a nice meal the cattle accomplished. After dessert the kids will go to bed, as the adults continue their praising of the cow.

Alan Michael (b.1967) lives and works in London, England. Recent exhibitions include Jan Kaps (Cologne, Germany), Christian Andersen (Copenhagen, Denmark), High Art (Paris, France), Galeria Zero (Milan, Italy), CAC Vilnius (Lithuania), Galerie Gregor Staiger (Zurich, Switzerland), Vilma Gold (London, England). Upcoming exhibitions include Frans Hals Museum (Haarlem, the Netherlands).



Alan Michael, *Train in the Snow*, 2014. Oil on canvas, 41.5 x 29.5 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Jan Kaps, Cologne. Photography by Keith Hunter