

Laura Langer

Execution

November 30, 2023 – January 27, 2024

Notes on Execution and Accumulation

The plan was to show up in the studio and paint using materials and impulses at hand, withholding judgment, just making, accumulating paintings until patterns start to emerge. Later, the editing will come, and with it, the show. During those many weeks, I shared voice messages with Rosa, an almost daily record of thoughts and complaints, images and some loose words as a sort of diary of that process. The following is somehow her digested translation of those notes.

Three figures stand one on top of another and point into a corner. They are accusing the corner for what it is. What it is—a limit, a dimension, a border—is unacceptable. “I wish I had a bigger room,” the walls seemed to threaten, to reach out with blood-stained hands.

*There is a layer of background sound throughout,
1. locking and unlocking the door (a tremendous clang)*

The show was bound to overflow its frame. Because you went every day to paint, six hours a day—a method based on an ideal, the execution of discipline, the desired outcome being some kind of freedom. We have always thought that if we take our work seriously enough, practice enough, return determined and find some mastery, that there will be magic, surprises, an alchemy of meaning and technique that we did not know we were capable of. Athletic, practical, building up, The shine, kind.

The method broke (you got sick), and you hated yourself for it, and still, you made too much. Reality is unacceptable, in spite of the way we find ways through it. In spite of how we get by.

Alone (TV Series): going into the wilderness is going into reality.

“You have to prepare. You have to be really methodical and organized in the wilderness. You have to treat a day like a day, stop when the sun goes down. You have to have your food, enough food, enough water.” You should have trusted less, foreseen the bad that happened. Strong, legible, confident, clear, finished.

2. Water running to wash brushes at the end of the day

But what about the reflecting mirror, making multiples of the judge, or no—more like the judge as bad magic, an agile fairy, genie, or elf in a children’s cartoon, shifting, not graspable because disappearing—*pop*—and reappearing on the other side of the room. The protagonist swings left to right, a blur, tripping on her own legs, legs turned to jelly as she spins to catch the mischief at her back.

On the other hand, you must not take too much food, for everything you take with you, you carry. At the same time, you should have trusted more, since it is your walls, your manner, so defensive, that keep you from being truly close and connected to people.

5. Voices in the cafe

The feeling of the end of life: a feeling of grief and of the radical recombination of elements. So much was lost, and yet everything is still there in pieces.

6. *The street being torn up*

In the city, coal mines were dug, and through this process of extraction, ground was unearthed to make tunnels; earth was dumped on nearby land; and the earth made hills, reshaping the landscape. And there among the piles of earth there is also a single real hill, made by geological tectonic shifts, indistinguishable now from the human-made land formations, and now not so different in effect, though so different in origin and meaning.

8. *The bus rattling, sounding like so many camera flashes*

In the room next door to the room where the execution took place, there is no sign of violence, but the smell makes its way through the wall. Generous, devoted, proliferating, fast, expansive, beautiful, free.

“It is a constant effort not to think.” And of course, there is thought, action driven by duty and imperatives, value-loaded words, ideals that keep popping in.

7. *A building being built*

There is a yearning in it, like lust or fury. Blindly reaching for something without knowing if it's there. Some days you have the sense of moving towards something, having everything that's needed, enough nourishment, enough energy, enough hope. Some days, there's nothing, and everything seems empty. This brings on vertigo and the sense that there is somewhere very dark and damaging you might fall to. Then all that can be done is to go on groping and groping for the walls. The walls then are not only limits but a necessary solid thing to orient from.

3. *The washing machine*

What's left are remnants of a process. You dug down each day, made marks on a canvas—a discharge—and looked at it. There is shame in that method. Shame at what you are made of, but shame too that the method doesn't work: you said with remorse that you could have gotten here by thinking, and with so much less suffering, but I don't agree. Every day you went, and acted on what you were capable of bearing that day. If it was thinking, then it was a different kind of thought. Not a scheme devised in abstraction and then executed, but one thought born of another, day after day.

4. *Voices in the street (Teilstraße)*

You are so hard on yourself, and that scares me sometimes, because I fear you will be hard on me too. I am hard on myself, and I hide away, seeming to reject you. We share thoughts—failure is not joyful; we didn't make it in time, the sun went down, we weren't there for the other when they needed us, words spoken out loud enter the body and take root there—that are also facts, and yet today the light hits different. To my mind, this is what you're always doing, working on figuring out the changing shapes the world takes.

9. *Voices in the street (Av. Reforma)*

If you think “it's all going to be ok” then there seems to be justice in chaos. This happens when there is an accumulation or containment of discharges—bones, marks, urine, energy—looked at and valued, like prospecting or archeology. The discarded becomes acceptable, the acceptable becomes good, virtues emerge, even better for their ugliness, for the fact that they have remained.

Rosa Aiello
Berlin, 2 August - 25 November 2023

List of works (left to right)

Pee and Glass, 2023

Oil on canvas

110 x 230 cm

Execution I, 2021-2023

Oil, canvas and acrylic medium on canvas

110 x 210 cm

Execution II, 2021-2023

Oil, canvas and acrylic medium on canvas

110 x 210 cm

Execution III, 2021-2023

Oil, canvas and acrylic medium on canvas

110 x 210 cm

Discharge Painting I, 2023

Oil on canvas

115 x 190 cm

Untitled, 2023

Oil on canvas

90 x 50 cm

A Violent World, 2023

Oil on canvas

150 x 210 cm

Laura Langer (1986, Buenos Aires, lives and works in Berlin) is an artist that works with painting and installation. Recent solo exhibitions include *Lateral*, Braunsfelder, Cologne (2023); *Headlines*, Kunsthaus Glarus, Glarus (2022); *Homesick*, The Wig, Berlin; *Homesick*, Weiss Falk, Basel (2021); *Liberty*, Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2020); and *The World is Round*, Piper Keys, London (2018). Selected group exhibitions include *The State I am in*, Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2022); *Les beaux jours*, Clearing, Brussels (2022); *Paint-by-numbers*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich (2022); *Presskopf*, Drei, Cologne (2021); *Tokyo Art & Crafts Object Expo*, XYZ Collective, Tokyo (2021) and *Aubades. Land Art for Aliens*, Weiss Falk, Basel (2017). In 2021, Langer was awarded the Hessische Kulturstiftung studio grant for a residency in London.