

Dear Hanna
January 12 - February 22, 2018
Opening: January 11, 7-10pm

Lukas Müller
b. 1986, Kassel
lives and works in Frankfurt am Main

What remains of a person when the person is gone? Hanna used to live in a shabby apartment on North Fullerton Avenue located in Logan Square, one of Chicago's historical neighborhoods that is home to a diverse, predominantly Latino and Polish population. The district's architecture is characterized by stately greystones and bungalow-style homes. Today, some of the splendid buildings are abandoned, their façades hidden behind wooden barricades. The underprivileged conceal their beers in paper bags when in public. Was Hanna one of them? No one knows. She has been gone for a while. Even on Google, her name brings up no results.

For his second solo show at the gallery, Lukas Müller installed objects and images that he found in and selected from Hanna's old apartment. While visiting Chicago, he gained access to her house through an acquaintance. Behind the entry door, which must have been locked for years, a universe reminiscent of Hanna's life unfolded under a thick layer of dust. Cut off from the outside world and aged in silence, an archive of stacked boxes blocked the hallway and Hanna's random acquisitions filled up and cluttered the living room and bedroom. She must have been a compulsive hoarder, obsessively assigning value and meaning to things that others would consider trash; useless and worthless.

Back in Germany, during a Skype call with his acquaintance Müller made a selection of pieces that the former would pack up and ship to him. Among the pieces was an old cookie box that contained Hanna's private letters, including mailings from spiritual healers, unwritten postcards with Christian prayers, and personal portraits of a blue-eyed baby dated November 2011. On top lay a limited-edition golden stamp designed by modern sculptor Isamu Noguchi, revealing another of Hanna's collecting passions. While browsing through the treasure box, it became apparent that Hanna not only suffered from excessive hoarding, but from mental anguish, depression, and anxiety. Her faith in God, it seems, was taken advantage of not only by spiritual healers, who she would pay for advice, but also by the Salesian Mission, a low-rated Catholic charity organization that would send her frequent letters requesting donations.

At Lucas Hirsch, Hanna's possessions are carefully presented in a newly developed display structure. This maze-like formation of steam pipes runs from the floor and through the walls to host Hanna's cherished items, such as a broken green glass vase, Porter Stansberry's heavily criticized pamphlet *The End of America*, and a shiny gilded swan sculpture. On the walls are two prints of sunsets, already faded and yellowed in Hanna's apartment, now laminated on chalky white canvases to which Müller added empty shelves on the edges. What are these objects? Why would Hanna silently disappear, leaving behind all her belongings? What remains of her is nothing more than a trace, an incomplete story, but one through which the hopes, fears, and the anger of people left behind by society can be told. Hanna might be a myth.

Text by Vivien Trommer

Lucas Hirsch

Opening hours
Wed – Sat: 1 – 6pm

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clockwise:

Furniture (Sunset Breakers), 2019
125 x 185 cm
Poster and metal on canvas

Untitled, 2019
85 x 108 cm
Identification card and paper in broken frames

The End of America, 2019
Dimensions variable
Objects on steam pipes

Furniture (Seagull Sunset), 2019
125 x 185 cm
Poster and metal on canvas

Dear Hanna, 2019
71,5 x 98,5 cm
Letters, flyers and photograph in broken frame

Heavy Duty, 2019
70 x 47 x 47 cm
Cardboard, frames, metal, photographs, glass