

BARK BERLIN GALLERY



KARLA MARCHESI
**CRUISE
CONTROL
DEATH
DRIVE**

9 sept – 6 oct 23

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Cruise Control **Death Drive**

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Cruise Control Death Drive – Text	7 – 11
Clock rocks (after Max Ernst) – Oil on Aluminium, 29 x 21 cm, 2023	14 – 15
Dry rot – Oil on Linen, 145 x 127 cm, 2023	16 – 17
Desert blues – Oil on Linen, 80 x 65 cm, 2023	18 – 19
Cuddle puddle – Oil on Linen, 155 x 135 cm, 2023	20 – 21
Plato's cave – Oil on Linen, 155 x 130 cm, 2023	22 – 23
Body horror – Oil on Aluminium, 29 x 21 cm, 2023	24 – 25
Locks – Oil on Aluminium, 29 x 21 cm, 2023	26 – 27
New heroes obelisk – Oil on Board, 80 x 60 cm, 2023	28 – 29
Monuments men – Oil on Linen, 145 x 127 cm, 2023	30 – 31
Bedrock – Oil on Linen, 145 x 127 cm, 2023	32 – 33
Off with their heads – Oil on Linen, 155 x 135 cm, 2023	34 – 35
On the nose – Oil on Linen, 50 x 40 cm, 2023	36 – 37
Prayer hands and back bones – Oil on Linen, 145 x 127 cm, 2023	38 – 39
Swamp life – Oil on Linen, 155 x 135 cm, 2023	40 – 41
Burn baby burn – Oil on Aluminium, 20 x 15 cm, 2022	42 – 43
Karla Marchesi – Bio	48 – 49



Cruise Control **Death Drive**

If humans were to vanish, we wouldn't be the first species to pull a disappearing act on this planet. Meet the Quagga – the zebra's quirky cousin. It used to be the party animal of South Africa, hanging out with zebras, antelopes, and strutting its stuff with ostriches across the African plains. Back then, Quaggas were like the life of the savanna's party – everyone's favorite guest. But oh boy, in the 17th century, humans decided to go on a hunting spree that made Quaggas go 'Poof!' like a magician's trick. By August 1883, the last Quagga party animal was found dead in captivity at the Amsterdam Zoo. Bummer, right?

Now let's talk about the passenger pigeon. These fellas liked to roam in massive groups that could cover up to 80 square kilometers. Legend has it that when these pigeon squads hit the road, the sky threw some shade – days of darkness thanks to the sheer pigeon headcount. And that's not all – these pigeons faced an eviction notice, courtesy of humans cutting down their homes and moving in with no invite. The pigeon census closed shop around 1900, leaving us all wondering if they missed their flight.

Moving on to the grand finale of extinction extravaganzas – the entire genus *Cylindraspis*, the giant tortoise. These guys were like the slow-motion superstars, kicking it on Réunion Island. They had this "chill with humans" vibe, which turned

out to be their downfall. By 1940, the curtain fell for these tortoises as they retreated to their turtle shells for the last time.

These extinct fellas are a tiny part of those that have been eradicated by humanity. Life on Earth started its gig around 3.5 billion years ago, and it's been a wild show with a lot of acts going MIA, even without humans hogging the spotlight. Imagine if half of Germany's population were not to live simultaneously today but rather, like in a relay race, send the next person into the race at the end of their life, the last of that half would arrive today after 3.5 billion years – now that's a scenic road trip through history! Sure, it's a silly thought, but sometimes, the absurdity is what makes it beautiful, right? Now, what's the other half up to during this marathon?

Not far from nonsense is the crazy Friedrich with the mustache who proclaimed: God is dead. But hang on, a couple of centuries before him, folks like Gröbler were already pondering: what if God had died and we were trapped in some sort of self-running clockwork? Both, a clockwork without death and a clockwork with death, would be a melancholic state for some of us – neither option sounds like a fun time, right? Sometimes, cult leaders have this lightbulb moment that the best exit strategy is to kick the bucket before the grand finale. It's like they're negotiating a creati-

7



ve breakup with some cosmic force, except the cosmic force might've ghosted them. So they move on to the next cosmic Tinder match – from ,Dear God' to ,Hey, Reason!'

Our quirks, those things that don't exactly make us kings and queens of the animal and plant kingdoms, can get under our skin and make us panic. We're like, ,Hey Sun, why aren't you revolving around us?' And then we're like, ,Guess what, we're not just distant cousins of apes; we're also Mother Nature's home improvement project!' Recently, we even realized our thoughts can be as nonsensical as a chicken wearing sunglasses. There's this quirky bit inside us that thinks it's the boss, and it's steering our ship in strange directions. We're like nature's roommate, trying to save the place from ourselves – oh, and our thoughts? They're like the funky wall art that came with the place. Thank goodness for those big brains of ours – every dog would've thrown a tantrum by now!

Or was Pavlov crazy because he had such a large brain? Polish scientists, thanks to Pavlov's meticulous lab notes decades ago, replicated his experimental setup. A bit of food, and saliva drips; light and food, and later only light, and saliva drips. However, the question for the reconstructors was, who conditioned whom? Did the dog's drool maybe also occur with light, so Pavlov was willing to bring more food? After all, the dog is a dumb creature compared to Pavlov! Af-

ter all, Pavlov even received the Nobel Prize! Hm. Perhaps unjustly? Maybe he owes it to the dog in his lab? Dogs, you see, have a super-secret eyelid muscle that their wolf pals totally missed out on. This muscle is like the VIP elevator for their upper eyelid. Wolves? They're stuck with the stairs. No big deal, right? Apparently, not even close to a VIP party invite like the Nobel Prize. Huh. Eibl-Eibesfeldt thought humans were born to give the ,eye hello,' an ancient language spoken universally between adults and tiny humans. Adults see baby eyeballs and go ,aww,' like it's a universal cuteness signal. Humans are kinda pre-programmed, and guess what – dogs totally hacked that program! From arch-enemies to BFFs, what a plot twist! And while we're on the topic of space, who was the first space cadet? Laika, the space-traveling dog. Coincidence? I think not!

Now, picture this: the dog owner with a knack for turning their living room into an animal kingdom – we're talking pigeons, parakeets, and even a tortoise or two. There's the hypnotized human, building pigeon condos and secure bird castles, washing imported grapes like they're auditioning for a grape commercial, and setting up salads in tortoise cafes. These tiny tortoises, rocking names of saints, living the high life on sun-soaked terraces – they've got it made in the shade, or rather, in the sun. They're like the VIPs of survival – reproducing in secret winter hideouts, guarded by



humans with a 'no predators allowed' policy. And they're breeding like bunnies, minus the moral dilemma! Reason? Logic? Intelligence? These creatures are riding our will like they're rulers of the universe.

With 3.5 billion years under the cosmic belt, we're basically the minions of Greek tortoises. These brainiacs kick it in swanky palaces with cozy chambers, where uniformed attendants sprint around like it's a race and wannabe tortoise parents wait for their chance to adopt a shell buddy. These palaces, known to humans as construction market or garden centers, are like the Disneyland of creature comforts. Need a bigger penthouse for your tortoise buddy? No problemo!

But let's not forget the real puppet masters – the plants. Out of 36 million hectares in Germany, over a third is a dance floor for crops. These plants are the real hustlers, making deals with us like they're handing out candy. 'Hey humans, wanna trade some sugar or starch for some security?' No competition, just hanging out with their plant buddies in sunny fields, sipping some nutrient cocktails – 'Hey, fertilizer, keep the party going!' Fields, fields everywhere, filled with nature's rock stars. Oh, and don't forget the daisies – they've got stories to tell. Walk around town, and look at those flower boxes, it's like floral architecture on a small scale. Pretty impressive, huh?

Now, where could this eco-party shift

its balance and find a new groove if humans don't learn to dance with Mother Nature? Imagine the next headline act in the world's gig – a species high-fiving over human relics, creating tear-jerking documentaries about us, just like we do about dinos. Is the world only real because we're watching it? What happens when someone else takes a peek? And what if wheat or other plants become the most successful species after us? Hyper-brightly glowing, embracing remnants of humanity, reveling in fears of their own demise, radiant leaves worshiping a new imagination, darkly diabolically shimmering at night; missing humans and yet whispering its name like a rumor from an unattainable time!

11

Now, picture this: the modern human cruising in their ride with cruise control on, zooming down Evolution Avenue. But wait, there's a sneaky feeling tapping on their shoulder – it's the urge to slam the brakes. They fiddle with the radio, hoping the DJ's got their back, asking them to slow down the ride. But guess what? The DJ's got his headphones on, and he can't hear the call of the Cruise Control Death Drive. And so, the saga of salad and tortoise begins – at the start of their evolutionary blockbuster, their very own Cruise Control Death Drive!





Cruise Control

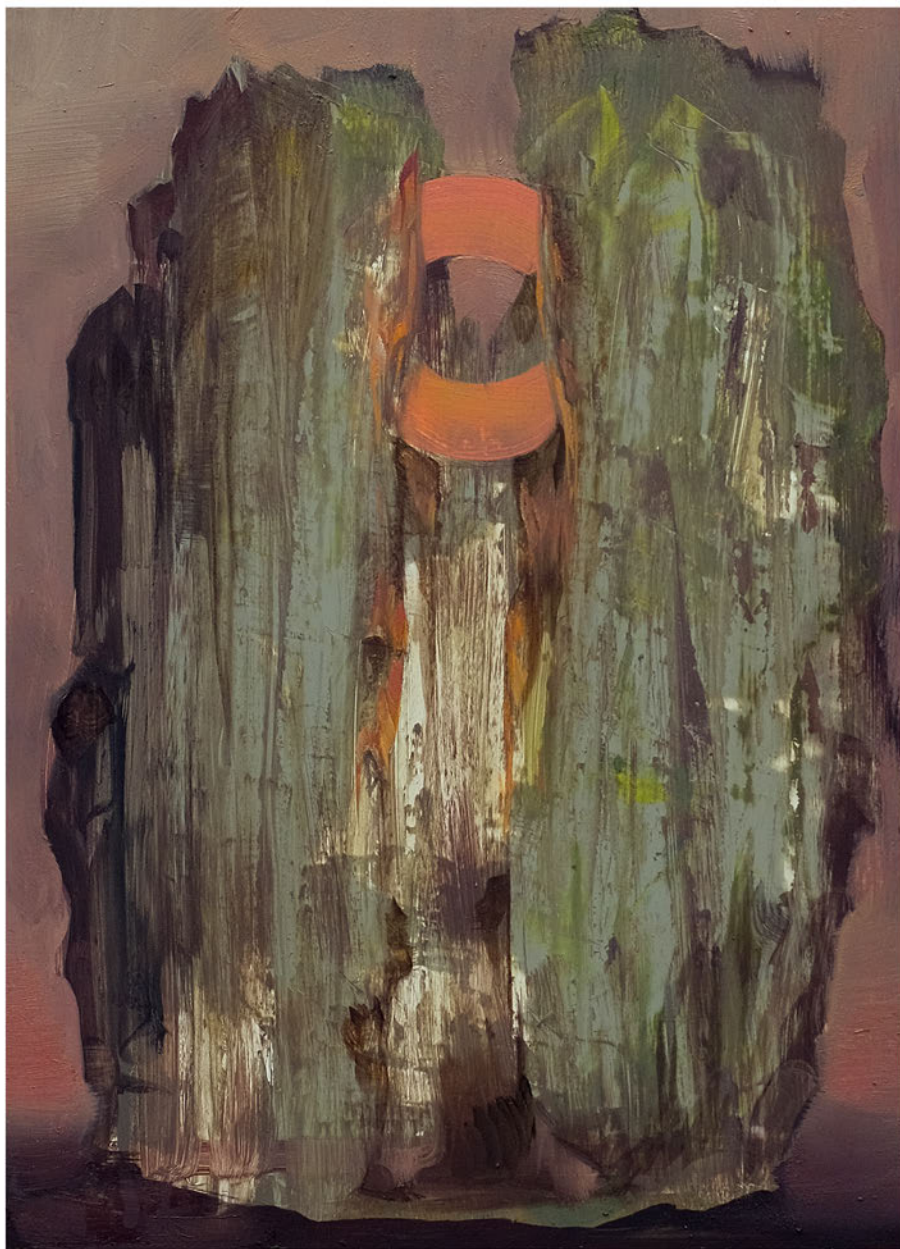
Clock rocks

(after Max Ernst)

Oil on Aluminium

29 x 21 cm

2023



Cruise Control

Dry rot

Oil on Linen
145 x 127 cm
2023

Karla Marchesi



Cruise Control

Desert blues

Oil on Linen
80 x 65 cm
2023

Karla Marchesi



Cruise Control

Cuddle puddle

Oil on Linen
155 x 135 cm
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Cruise Control

Plato's cave

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Body horror

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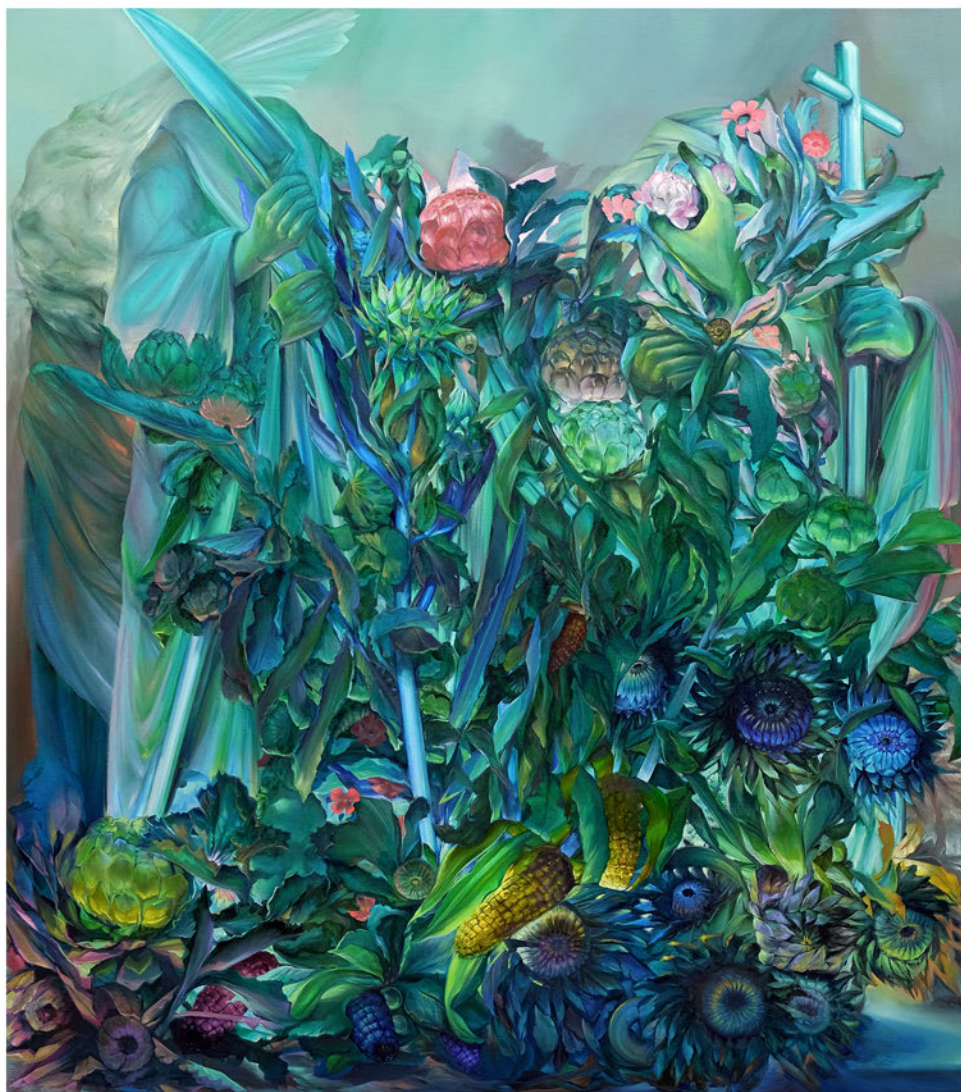
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On the nose

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155 x 135 cm
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Cruise Control

Burn baby burn

Oil on Aluminium

20 x 15 cm

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*1984

Brisbane, Australia

lives and works in Berlin, Germany

2003

Semester study

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, United States of America

2004

Bachelor of Fine Art

Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia

2007

Bachelor of Fine Art

First Class Honours, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia

Exhibitions

Selection, s = solo

2023

Cruise Control Death Drive

BARK BERLIN GALLERY, Berlin, Germany (s)

Slow is smooth, Smooth is fast

Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (s)

Miniutra

Kunsthalle M3, Berlin, Germany

2022

Desire Path

Jan Manton Gallery, Teneriffe, Australia (s)

Slow Burn

Jumbo Receiver, Berlin, Germany (s)

Mirus LA Sneak Peek

Mirus Gallery, Los Angeles, United States

Feel Free

SCOTTY, Berlin, Germany

Holdings 2022

Jan Manton Gallery, Brisbane, Australia

200 under 2000

CSR.ART, Berlin, Germany

2021

Sugar Fever Dream

Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (s)

Vainty Fair: Select works

Jan Manton Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (s)

	Planet Mother The Foundry, Luxemburg, Luxemburg	
	Vitality Mirus Gallery, Denver, United States	
	Trash to Impress PR17, Berlin, Germany & Polarraum, Hamburg, Germany	
2020	Built Forms Redcliffe Regional Gallery, Queensland, Australia	
	The Family Home Redland Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia	
	5 Years Anniversary Exhibition Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne	
	An Australian Spring Michael Reid Gallery Berlin, Germany	
	Floral Obsession Artscape Luxembourg, Luxembourg Art Week	
	Tondo Presented by InFormat, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany	49
2019	To proceed within a trap Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (s)	
	Re_wild Artscape Contemporary Art Luxembourg at CMS, Luxembourg	
	Female Gaze Artscape Contemporary Art Luxembourg at the Foundry, Luxemburg	
	Outmoded* current, futuristic, atemporal, nonexistent or permanent Nachtspeicher23, Hamburg, Germany	
2022	Third Prize – Redland Art Awards Australia	
2019	Finalist – Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize Bendigo, Victoria, Australia	
2017	Finalist– Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize Bendigo, Victoria, Australia	

This catalog was published on the
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