

Tobias Donat x Buero Kofink Schels
Nir Altman Galerie, Munich
Global Goals
May 4 – June 16, 2018

The exhibition *Global Goals* is composed of three daybeds, each of which is positioned on a rug in the gallery space. The metal furniture was designed by Buero Kofink Schels, a Munich-based architectural studio, with which the artist Tobias Donat is collaborating for this newly produced show. The structure of the daybed, fitted with cushions and set on rugs, serves as Donat's frame.

Visitors are welcome to settle in, to rest and stretch out. This makes the daybeds both art objects and useable furniture. They are made for praxis, for a *vita activa* that includes napping and daydreaming – let's approach them step by step.

Daybed. As a form, the daybed is one of the oldest known and traditional pieces of furniture. There are hieroglyphic representations of daybeds from ancient Egypt, they were later known in ancient Greece as *kline* and were finally adopted by the Romans. In the Classical age, *symposia* were held on them as well as wild feasts although these may have been virtually the same thing.

Today the daybed does not differ significantly from the common sofa or couch. The sofa serves primarily for seating; lying down on them is possible – however those who do – indicate to not feel very well. Conversely, a daybed is meant for lying down. A person sitting on it seems about to get up, ready to go, on the move. Stretched out too stiffly, on the other hand, it seems as if one cannot let go of one's posture and is scared to relinquish, afraid to commit oneself to the means the furniture.

Cushions. The covers of the exhibited daybeds are based on popular Art Nouveau colors and patterns. Getting closer to the daybeds, viewers will notice that the patterns are neither trailing plants nor entwined flowers. Instead, a variety of questions alternate with diverse open source pictograms. Each sofa has its own color scheme and a completely different pattern. The pattern consists in part of words spelling out the following three questions:

HOW MIGHT WE FIGHT INEQUALITY & INJUSTICE?
HOW MIGHT WE TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE?
HOW MIGHT WE END EXTREME POVERTY?

The questions indicate three of seventeen global goals that the United Nations aims to reach by 2030. The goals, set down in 2015, address different areas and fields that pose threats or cause irreparable damages. They are both about preserving the environment and protecting life.

General Assembly. The rugs, actually doormats, arrange the daybeds in relation to one another in the exhibition context. Each daybed stands on its own textile pedestal, which depicts walls and sometimes windows, indicating or even creating a physical space. The architectural blueprints printed on them assign them both abstract and concrete positions. Where are these places? And are these signified rooms that one enters private or public – and what exactly do these terms actually mean historically and in the future?

The threats and crises behind the seventeen Global Goals are real and directly or indirectly affect every person on this planet. So why should art, of all things, refrain from efforts to address the urgent problems of humanity? It is undoubtedly one of the crucial functions of artistic production to represent and reflect upon social trends, events, relationships, peculiarities and habits.

At the same time – and this resonates in the *Global Goals* installation – art is and has always been given a special role in addressing worldly shortcomings: By dealing with and depicting them, it sometimes also ensures that nothing happens; that purchasing critical works is enough of a stand to take.

So what about our relationship between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, between involvement and slumber? Is the daybed ultimately a symbol of Late Roman decadence – and if so, could reflecting on it make us become concerned?

HOW MIGHT WE MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?

Text by Konstantin Lannert