

Baader-meinhof

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If It Die

Henry Belden

September 23 - October 28, 2022

FADE IN

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

A rust worn iron [redacted] lies in wait, [redacted] stained with smoke and sheer [redacted] frayed edges haunt a [redacted] mottled by years of muddy [redacted] and [redacted]. The [redacted] is hung pregnant with a pushpin patchwork of [redacted], a collage of [redacted] with averted gaze. Resting aloft an heirloom wooden vanity, covered by the fresh dust of the newly dispossessed, a handwritten letter pens an appeal, "if you see this [redacted]" Drifting from the [redacted] of a forgotten [redacted], spinning a hopelessly scratched [redacted], a [redacted] precarious warble floats like the dirge of a broken [redacted], "I love to love to love to love to love to love to love..."

BAADER-MEINHOF

Henry Belden's solo exhibition, *If It Die*, drips with the angst of the unrequited turned sour, brimming with violence, the demented night terrors of traumatized youth. The works on view harmonize like the recursive refrains of a psychoanalytic seance or the frantic scrawlings of a private diary, Belden weaves poetic deceits, unstable fictions which meditate on loss, presence/absence, criminality and homosexual desire, both real and imagined.

"What I want is to represent reality on the one hand, and on the other to stylize it into art[...] I invent the character of a novelist, whom I make my central figure; and the subject[...] is just that very struggle between what reality offers him and what he desires to make of it."¹

[redacted] work has an overt interest in the notion of mise en abyme: the conceptual act of reproduction, repetition with minor differentiation. By copying the texts of others, and, indeed, your own artworks, it seems as though you are complicating ideas around authorship and the aura of truth of an "original." The exhibition seems to revel in a heterogenous flattening: low-reliefs collapsing in on themselves, reincarnated in charcoal, photographed and reanimated in the darkroom. It is as though the "artist" is in persistent self-reflection, their sullen interior gaze metastatized through the myopic, self-fulfilling prophecies of a wounded teenager.

[redacted]. While the voice performatively developed into a love-scorned poet, a lapsed-catholic serial killer, the work is a real expression of anger, [redacted] a contemplation on loss, presence/absence, criminality, and homosexual desire. The texts focus on adolescent love as a pure structure of meaning, and how the violation of this 'truth' results in derealized pain. They are love letters to the dissociated.

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André Gide from his memoir, *If It Die* (1924).

Henry Belden (b. 1993, Ann Arbor, MI) lives and works in New York City. Recent exhibitions include *When the Word Becomes Flesh*, Baader-Meinhof, Omaha, NE; *Under the Volcano II*, LOMEX, New York, NY; *Foul Perfection*, Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt, 2019 and *When I was a child...*, MX Gallery, New York, NY, 2018. This will be his first solo exhibition with Baader-Meinhof.