

AT THIS POINT  
IN MY LIFE  
(I'LL HAVE THE  
CALAMARI)

G2

Friedrich Kunath

June 07 – September 08, 2024

G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig

With AT THIS POINT IN MY LIFE (I'LL HAVE THE CALAMARI), the G2 Kunsthalle is presenting a solo exhibition by the Chemnitz-born artist Friedrich Kunath (\*1974). The Los Angeles-based artist works in painting, object and installation. The exhibition features drawings and paintings, many of which are being shown for the first time.

Kunath shows supposedly ideal landscapes that are permeated by romantic and pop-cultural references and, at second glance, nullify their perfectionism. By interweaving historical epochs with contemporary mass cultures, he creates an anachronism that unites past and present and gives rise to a universal timeline.

Kunath draws places full of longing, often clothed in the garb of German Romanticism or reminiscent of poster motifs: radiant sunsets, tranquil forest scenes or winter landscapes covered in snow. Kunath uses the landscapes as metaphors for inner feelings and states, which thus function as open projection surfaces for the viewer.

In the cabinet of the first room of the Kunsthalle, 28 drawings form a kind of exhibition within the exhibition. Kunath collects fragments of sentences and words in his everyday life and collects them in a notebook. He returns to this archive again and again. Here Kunath shows, for example on notepads of well-known Los Angeles hotels, typical scenes of his pictorial worlds with his typical vocabulary. Some charcoal and pencil drawings are strongly reminiscent of black and white photographs. Their monochrome coloring gives the drawings an independence in Kunath's work that distinguishes them from his oil paintings. Other depictions with colored pencil and the typical sunsets are more reminiscent of large-format oil paintings. Overall, the collection of drawings illustrates the richness and complexity of Kunath's world, which finds inspiration in art history, literature, music, film and in the artist's biography.

Iconic motifs and elements of 19th century German Romanticism are repeatedly echoed in Kunath's work. For example, the depiction of the sea with a small figure in *On the beach* is strongly reminiscent of Caspar David Friedrich's (1774-1840) *Monk by the Sea*. Typical of Romanticism is the subordinate position of the human being, who is often depicted from behind and stands allegorically for the whole of humanity like an anonymous shell. In *Someone's therapist knows all about you (study)*, Kunath depicts the window motif, also familiar from Romanticism, in which the landscape is viewed from the interior. This depiction, also known as the perspective of longing, stands for the contrasts between loneliness and society, the security of familiar surroundings and the danger of the wide world, culture and nature. Kunath refers primarily to early Romanticism, in which the principle of Romantic irony is another striking feature. It is not about a contrary statement of something, but about distancing oneself from something in order to reveal its constructedness.

The longing for the unknown expanse or the return to a past time is a desire deeply rooted in the human psyche. This desire often goes hand in hand with an idealization of moments, places or relationships. Kunath uses landscapes as metaphors for inner feelings and states; they function as projection surfaces for longing sensations.

The motifs are often applied to a relief-like, expressive layer of paint and are superimposed like an image projection from a projector. This pictorial layer only becomes apparent on closer inspection. Kunath carves simple symbols, logos or lines of text into this layer of paint.

The paradisiacal scenery tilts; heavy storm clouds gather, drops roll down the canvas like tears and lettering such as *Have you forgotten me?* are engraved into the surface of the canvas like drawings by young people on school desks.

In Friedrichs Kunath's *Never liked you but still nostalgic*, we look at a sunset scene by the sea under palm trees, with a bed placed in the foreground. Kunath combines objects here that seem to come from the past and trigger a nostalgic feeling: an old telephone, the scenery reminiscent of airbrush posters from the 1990s and the logo of the enormously successful Britpop band Oasis in the 1990s, which can also be read as a description of the scene as an oasis.

The sentence *Never Liked You but still nostalgic*, the pressed-in pillow, which indicates that someone must have just been lying there, and the telephone trigger the formation of a narrative in the viewer that tells of the traces and clues of figures.

However, Kunath is not only referring to German Romanticism, but also to the American painting movement in the mid-19th century, which was inspired by German Romanticism. The so-called Hudson River School was dedicated to both American and South American landscapes. Kunath's work thus contains clear references to American painters such as Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900). The works embody both a thirst for discovery in the tropical illustrations and the American promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as stated in the Declaration of Independence of 1776.

Kunath uses the motif of wandering and traveling, which is symptomatic of Romanticism. Attributes of the traveler can be found again and again in his work. Paths and trails meander through his worlds; unclear from where and where they lead. The allure of the unknown in the foreign is palpable. In Kunath's worlds, the horse is replaced by a Porsche; here, too, he transfers the past into the present.

Kunath formulates mechanisms of conscious and subconscious multimedia memory in a precise and at the same time playful way. In addition to images, we also store events in sounds, smells or feelings. Using logos of bands or poetic text fragments that move like song lyrics in rhythms over the images, he triggers not only visual perception, but also auditory and, above all, emotional perception.

Kunath's multi-layered pictures tell of landscapes that seem like a synthesis of romantic painting and the radiance of American pop culture, of symbol-laden objects from the past and simple text and cartoon motifs, of interpersonal relationships, conscious and subconscious mechanisms of perception and the reality and transfiguration of memories.

Text: Leo Wedepohl

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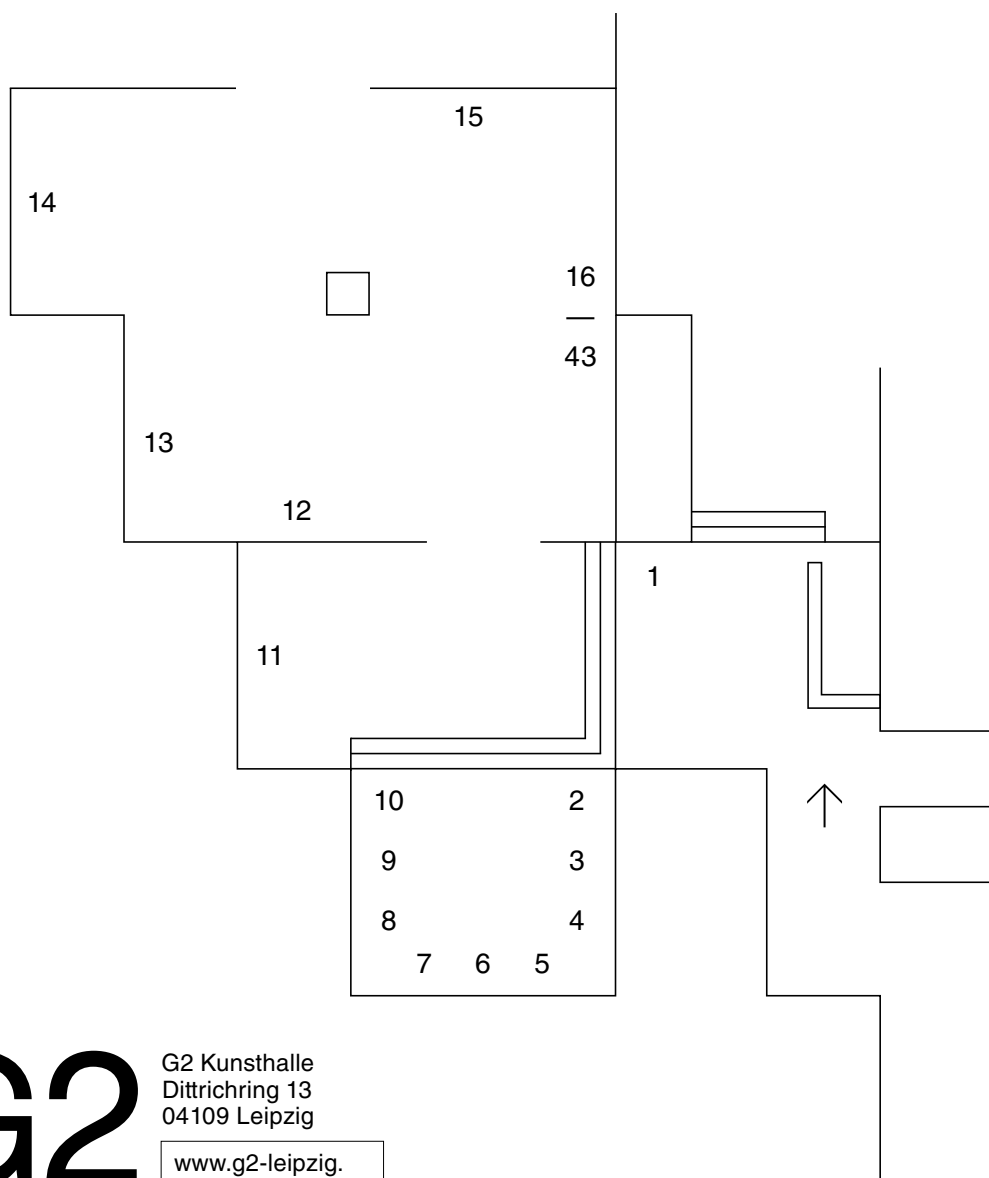
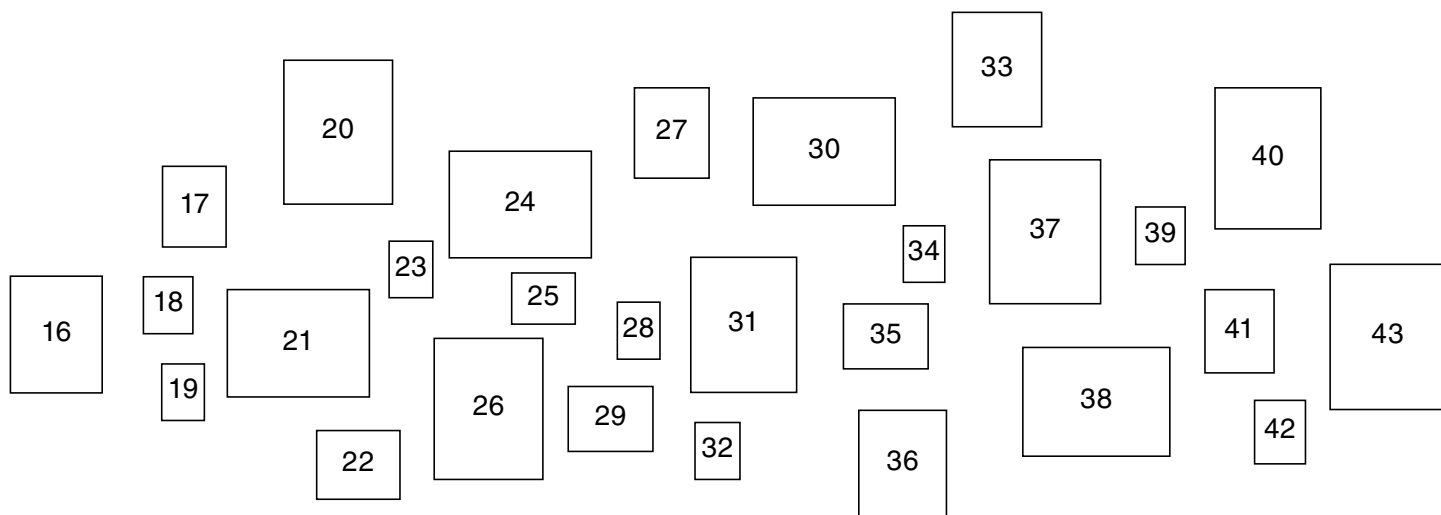
## PAINTINGS

- |    |  |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|----|--|
| 1  | SOMEONES'S THERAPIST KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOU (STUDY), 2020<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm            | 18 | I HOPE FUTURE ME IS HAPPY, 2024/18<br>Watercolor on paper, 104,1×78,7 cm                     | 35 | I'VE NEVER BEEN TO CALIFORNIA, 2024<br>Coal and graphite on paper, 26,7×18,4 cm  |
| 2  | I AM EASY TO FIND (STUDY), 2020<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                                   | 19 | ONLY LOVERS LEFT, 2024<br>Coal and graphite on paper, 26,67×18,4×cm                          | 36 | HONEY I'M HOME, 2024<br>Watercolor on paper, 61×45,7 cm  |
| 3  | I WAITED FOR YOU, BUT I NEVER TOLD YOU WHERE I WAS. (STUDY), 2023<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm | 20 | I MISS YOU SO MUCH., 2019<br>Coal, acrylic and ink on paper, 76,2×55,9 cm                    | 37 | I SLEPT A LOT AND WORKED NON-STOP, 2019<br>76,2×55,9 cm  |
| 4  | WE'RE NOT HERE TO UNDERSTAND (STUDY), 2019<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                        | 21 | NO OTHER, 2024<br>Watercolor on paper, 76,2×55,9 cm  | 38 | YOU WON'T KNOW IF YOU DON'T GO, 2019<br>Acrylic and charcoal on paper, 55,9×76,2 cm  |
| 5  | HONEY I'M HOME (STUDY), 2022-23<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                                   | 22 | IF THAT'S THE SOLUTION I WANT MY PROBLEM BACK, 2024<br>Oil on canvas, 35,6×43,2 cm           | 39 | IF YOU LEAVE ME – CAN I COME TOO?, 2024<br>Coal on paper, 27,9×21,6 cm   |
| 6  | IT GETS EASIER (STUDY), 2018<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                                      | 23 | ALLERGY SEASON, 2024<br>Coal and graphite on paper, 26,7×18,4 cm                             | 40 | THERE IS AN EVERLASTING SONG., 2024<br>Watercolor on paper, 104,1×76,2 cm  |
| 7  | CALL ME IF YOU GET LOST (STUDY), 2023<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                             | 24 | I'M IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING EXCEPT LOVE., 2019<br>Coal on paper, 76,2×55,9 cm               | 41 | IT'S TODAY AGAIN, 2019<br>Coal on paper, 76,2×55,9 cm  |
| 8  | STILL HUNGRY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS (STUDY), 2020<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                  | 25 | SOMEONE'S THERAPIST KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOU, 2019<br>Acrylic and ink on paper, 76,2×55,9 cm      | 42 | I STARTED WITH NOTHING I STILL HAVE MOST OF IT, 2018<br>Acrylic and ink on paper, 78,7×58,4 cm   |
| 9  | NOW IT'S JUST YOU + ME (STUDY), 2021<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                              | 26 | NO PLANS, 2024<br>Acrylic on paper, 22,9×30,5 cm   | 43 | I DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, 2019<br>Acrylic and coal on paper, 76,2×55,9 cm  |
| 10 | YOU COULD BE MY FUTURE CRUSH (STUDY), 2023<br>Oil on canvas, 76,2×61 cm                        | 27 | HOW TO GET UP AND GET DRESSED, 2024<br>Watercolor on paper, 78,7×104,1 cm                    |    |  |
| 11 | STORMS NEVER LAST, 2022/24<br>Acrylic on canvas, 140×203 cm                                    | 28 | BECAUSE WE NEED EACH OTHER, 2024<br>Graphit und Kohle und Buntstift auf Papier, 26,7×18,4×cm |    | AT THIS POINT IN MY LIFE (I'LL HAVE THE CALAMARI)<br>Friedrich Kunath<br>June 7 - September 8, 2024<br>G2 Kunsthalle, Dittrichring 13<br>04109 Leipzig   |
| 12 | ON THE BEACH, 2023<br>Oil on canvas, 122×98 cm   | 29 | FUCK THE POLICE, 2024<br>Pencil on paper, 45,7×38,1 cm                                       |    | OPENING HOURS :<br>Wed 3-8 p.m. / Fri-Sun 12-5 p.m.  |
| 13 | NEVER LIKED YOU BUT STILL NOSTALGIC, 2020<br>Oil on canvas, 244×198 cm                         | 30 | I STILL OWE YOU FOR THE HOLE IN MY HEART, 2024<br>Coal on paper, 27,9×21,6 cm                |    | PUBLICATIONS :<br>Thu 3 pm German<br>Thu 4 pm English<br>Registration for the tours online at <a href="http://www.g2-leipzig.de">www.g2-leipzig.de</a> . |
| 14 | WHEN THE HEART IS OPEN, 2022/24<br>Acrylic and oil on canvas, 167,6×243,8 cm                   | 31 | DEAR UNCERTAINTY, 2019<br>Acryl auf Papier, 76,2×55,8 cm                                     |    | EXPERIENCE :<br>Normal 5 Euro<br>Reduced 3 Euro  |
| 15 | WHERE ARE YOU NOW, 2020<br>Oil on canvas, 183×152 cm   | 32 | IT'S ONLY LOVE, GIVE IT AWAY, 2020<br>Coal and pencil on paper, 55,9×76,2 cm                 |    |  |
|    | <b>DRAWINGS</b>  | 33 | I DON'T CARE ANYMORE, 2024<br>Watercolor on paper, 78,7×104,1 cm                             |    |  |
| 16 | IT'S A START, 2024<br>Watercolor and colored pencil on Paper, 61×45,7 cm                       | 34 | DON'T FOLLOW ME I'M LOST TOO, 2024<br>Coal on paper, 55,9×43,2 cm                            |    |  |
| 17 | THEY'RE PLAYING OUR SONG, 2024<br>Coal on paper, 27,9×21,6                                     |    |  |    |  |

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