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View of "Ups and Downs of a Flipped Planet," 2020.

Ups and Downs of a Flipped Planet

GALERIE HUBERT WINTER

Breite Gasse 17

September 5–October 10, 2020

Hands without bodies, leather jackets with absent wearers, bronze figures with twisted legs. This deceptively sophisticated three-person exhibition, curated by Chiara Vecchiarelli, percolates with morbid undertones and latent violence. Eliza Douglas’s paintings seem to merge the calligraphic abstraction of Franz Kline with the meaty and cartoonish look of Philip Guston. Naturalistic hands, executed by another artist, are fused to far more painterly, elongated arms extending to the edge of canvases—or, in *I Am All Soul*, 2016, are connected by fleshy brush to equally convincing feet. With their gestural brushwork, the clothed appendages appear more alive than the meticulously rendered hands, which have a lifeless, waxwork quality.

The leather jackets hanging from wooden armatures, all black save for single white piece, are by Jojo Gronostay’s brand DWMC, which stands for “Dead White Men’s Clothes,” a Ghanaian idiom for the second-hand clothing brought into the country from the Global North. The name instantly brings mourning to mind, while their pristine state and presentation in the gallery’s white cube as sculptures enhance their inert, soulless state. Displayed side by side, the missing bodies of Douglas’ painting and these unworn jackets create an unsettling *mise en scène*.

The two bronze sculptures by Iván Argote (*Antipodos*, 2020) show small human figures with inverted feet, one seated and the other merrily walking. Their finish is rough, their details unarticulated. That these figures appear to be totally nonchalant about their deformation gives them a comical air. This in turn saves the show from becoming lugubrious, offering a balancing light-heartedness to the curator’s obvious fascination with the macabre.

— Yuki Higashino