

Text by Kerstin Stakemeier
Portrait by anonymous

In 1909, Lu Märten wrote a novel refabricating the deaths of everyone she grew up with. Her whole family. They had all died of tuberculosis. Märten was 30 years old. She too had been perpetually sick. Working-class tenements kill people. And life does not get more comforting once you leave them to go to work. Working-class life kills people. Märten's novel is excessive. She narrates a life from death. The *Bildung* (education by its bourgeois function) Märten and her class were exposed to but not addressed by is made to be fostered within the horizon of its subjects' expanded reproduction. A *Bildung* of the subjects of perpetual capitalizations. Märten made another *Bildung*. When Märten transforms the experience of surviving the death of her class into a novel and titled it *Torso*. *The Book of a Child*, she writes an excess: a *Bildung* defiant of surplus, one that is a fantasy of its forms and shapes and measures. Organizing sense/s, realizing (a) life. Throughout her life, Märten rededicated the means of *Bildung*—like the novel—to those who were only ever dying tragically at its fringes. Not just (in) the novel. Two thirds through *Torso* she

tence, a real fantasy. In *Distant Clinical Entity* (2017), Heinemann used Crass's font as a means of direct dedication. A series of drawings, poems, and catapults that align weapons and targets in the wrong order, threading them together into floor garlands.

What comes into view once *Bildung* isn't advancing an aspirational horizon of surplus, once *Bildung*'s horizon is replaced by a living life wrested from death, is a sharp relief of needs. And it comes to figure that not ever in the history of what dies have needs ever been what they are habitually called: basic. If anything, this is what Märten demonstrated. And Crass. And what Heinemann marks, builds, writes and sings. Needs. Unbasic. Märten and Crass were working to autonomize (their) needs. Taking counterculture literally. Heinemann does too. Art as counterculture. Not a political pose but something inherently folkic. *Glorie* (2022) at Cabinet and Lizzie Homersham's beautiful text on it for *Artforum*. Read it. Cardboard bird houses as a series of lovingly ornamented non-essential holes, topped with a paper garland of gay sexed bodies. Unreproduced and unproductive, but endlessly repeated. Something poetic, something formulated in and as a dedication to a specific form of life and its subsistence.

I would say that this was always pressingly true for any art that matters. But devastatingly right now this is a practice addressed to the real in its most obvious forms. Only liberal delusions of *Bildung*, like my labor, and yours, and his, still own some means to pretend otherwise. It is the *not* banality of being able to recognize yourself, your loves, and your lives, each day. Märten consistently recognizes her life as living off of death. Crass, a counterculture living off of its dissolution. Heinemann needs a lot to recognize himself. He needs to drag it into the present, the gallery, build it up, and rededicate all folkic remnants in reach to shape a recognizability that does not isolate him. Heinemann is never there alone but for all its humor and beauty Heinemann's work is always the excess of a lack. Life identified out of lack. Into excess. Heinemann consistently ventures into aesthetic forms that are labor's extra. The British Amateur. But that is not him. That British Amateur was competing with professional labor in his reproductive time. Heinemann is making work grow out of labor into "the whole life-work of a human."² Of him. Märten again. In Heinemann's work, it is not the allusion to functional forms that I see, but the presence of functional

Caspar

asks, all caps: "IF YOU ARE AN ARTIST OF THE LIVING LIFE OR ONE OF ITS FORMS." Excess or surplus? Rededicating *Bildung* or being its custodian? This is about Caspar Heinemann. His work is an excess of perpetual rededication just as much. Heinemann too is not dropping what was left for dead to stage himself among the forms of an aspirational futurity. He too builds fantasies of a *living life* from means unfit for expanded reproduction. Real ones. Dealing with what made his characters, symbols, and sense/s pass, he fabricates their presence. His work is gleefully undying. I am still heartbroken for not seeing *The farmyard is not a violent place and I look exactly like Judy Garland* (2019–20) in person. Larne Abse Gogarty, who I believe introduced me to Heinemann's work, wrote about it for *Art Monthly*. It was a play and a show Heinemann manifested with Alex Margo Arden. The staging of a fantasy that is real when sung.

Heinemann was born in London in 1994. He is far too young to have ever seen Crass live. Most of us are. Still, that band, who agitated, organized, set up (and failed) their own means of production, resurfaces regularly in his work. Crass was using the medium of jubilation (music) as a means of a *Bildung* dedicated to capital's death. Crass was an excess of subsis-

means. His art objects treat reification as a process of individual manifestation. His shows call upon everyone entering to go reify. Direct action reification for everyone. By everyone.

Heinemann just goes on with life. His collection of poetry, *Novelty Theory* (2019), confirmed my suspicion that he was simply amassing what piled up in the life of daily needs, without ever naturalizing 'daily' into basic: reoccurrences of specific objects and their relations which he has been laying out for us in spaces and on pages. Habitual integrations.

1. Lu Märten, "Historisch-Materialistisches über Wesen und Veränderung der Künste. Eine pragmatische Einleitung," in *Formen für den Alltag: Schriften, Aufsätze, Vorträge* [1921] (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1982), 63.
2. See Lu Märten, "Die künstlerischen Momente der Arbeit in alter und neuer Zeit," *Formen für den Alltag: Schriften, Aufsätze, Vorträge* [1903] (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1982), 14.



Heinemann