

MUNICH

Andreas Hofer

GOETZ COLLECTION

Time seemed to flow in all directions in this show. While the exhibition's title—"Andy Hope 1930"—suggested a chronology, 1930 wasn't the only year that played a role: The 1950s and '60s were also evoked, largely via images from comics and science-fiction movies, though quotes from the history of modern art and ancient mythology turned up as well. A prime example of this anachronism was the largest picture in the show, the nearly sixteen-and-a-half-foot-long *Thunder Agent Nevada Doom 4419*, 2004. It shows a golden chariot that floats above a sea of flames as it is pulled by red, blue, white, and black horses. A figure with its fist held aloft—a warrior, saint, or sun god—is standing in the chariot. Down below, a tiny form in the ravaged landscape might be Superman praying or just an awestruck believer wearing a red cloak. Saint Elias as a Christian incarnation of a heathen sun god and the Greek Apollo come to mind; the colorfulness of the image recalls Kazimir Malevich's late pictures, and an emphasis on surface lends an abstract touch. The confusion reaches a high point when one learns that the model for this picture was a tapestry by the Nazi painter Werner Peiner. This sort of hybrid figure—half god, half criminal—can be found everywhere in Andreas Hofer's work, along with warriors, Supermen, devils, animals with human heads, dragons, and dinosaurs.

The artist himself assembled this large assortment of drawings and paintings and specified how they were to be displayed in the rooms at the Goetz Collection. The exhibition presents a world that was always already present: in dreams,

fears, comic books, the flights of fantasy described in science-fiction books and films—but hardly ever in modern art, always held in check by the black square against a white background. Yet Hofer's vision comes exploding onto the scene, seeming to burst out of a cave made of cardboard, part of the installation *Trans Time*, 2006. This is the realm of pop icons, of dreams and nightmares, of the imagination itself. But this is not the anguish of German Expressionism. Nor is it the sort of nostalgia we saw in the painting of the '80s. It is an ethos that's been updated: offbeat, trendy, and somehow humorous as well.

Hofer presents us with a world echoing the one described by French thinker Bruno Latour in his marvelous book *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991; English translation, 1993), one filled with grotesque hybrids and mysterious objects that proliferated all the more wildly the more modernism devoted itself to purification and standardization. Now everything that was driven into caves and holes is emerging from them again in Hofer's work, as if duplicated a thousand times over. The artist wallpapered one room with large photographs of his own paintings and drawings, then hung the originals on top of this wallpaper. Superman, a dragon, and a dwarf wielding an ax all appear simultaneously in multiple copies. They become patterns. Just as with comic books and science-fiction movies, there was something a bit addictive about this room—and indeed about the show as a whole.

—Noemi Smolik

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

Andreas Hofer, *Trans Time*, 2006, mixed-media installation.

