

This text is incomplete.

Parts of it were written for the exhibition *Bits and pieces*<sup>1</sup> by Mathieu Dafflon and Leevi Toija.

Here you will also find further texts, such as instructions or addresses.

They all belong to this text.

## **Welcome and goodbye in the face of the New Ice Age**

Dear guest,

Welcome to the presidential suite of the Hotel Riu Plaza.

We are not here voluntarily.

Until recently, DOOM SPA was located on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of Lietzenburger Str 2/4, directly opposite.

The DOOM SPA CITY WEST series (2022-2025), which concludes today, was created, among other things, to share special places in Berlin and to look at the city. We have moved from the horizontal, ground-level Ernst Reuter Platz in Charlottenburg to here, the so-called City West on the 17th floor. Lately, the choice of location (rundown high-rise) and surroundings (Berlin City West behind Wittenbergplatz), the way to the room (narrow lift to the 13th floor, then a very nice wide view), conveyed a setting that combined unease and decadence at the same time. The bar always had (cheap) champagne.

For one of the last exhibitions (*True Knit Sweaters*), Mathieu Dafflon and Leevi Toija built a sauna into the small penthouse, which had originally served as the architect's private sauna and then as a brothel sauna for many years. So, in a way, DOOM SPA CITY WEST arrived home shortly before its end. Admittedly, the attention that a special urban location draws away from the art on display sometimes presented challenge. But I fondly remember the shy self-awareness of naked people (in towels) as they contemplated the artworks, even though a functioning sauna and a place with this view was and remains a sensation. By the end of the opening night, the glass windows facing the city were blinded by the evaporated warm moisture of the DOOM SPA (art) body.

## **Attempts to combat bourgeois coldness**

In the days before I had to move out of the DOOM SPA premises on the 13th floor of a high-rise building in Berlin's City West involuntarily and at very short notice, my gaze fell on a book belonging to my daughter: Walt Disney's *Lustiges Taschenbuch* No. 133: *Die neue Eiszeit* (The New Ice Age)<sup>2</sup>. I had found the name for all of the present - and for the new DOOM SPA season: *Die neue Eiszeit!*

In line with this, I recently discovered the concept of *bourgeois coldness* (*bürgerlichen Kälte*) from critical theory. In *Erziehung nach Auschwitz* (Education after Auschwitz), (1966)<sup>3</sup> Theodor W. Adorno explains the connection between interpersonal coldness and the Germans' turning a blind eye during the Holocaust: 'If this coldness were not a fundamental feature of anthropology, i.e. of the nature of human beings as they actually are in our society, Auschwitz would not have been possible; people would not have accepted it.' He considers indifference towards others to be a prerequisite for Auschwitz and for the fact that there was no mass resistance. For him, the bourgeois-capitalist order produces and reproduces this pervasive coldness.

Henrike Kohpeiß describes *bourgeois coldness* (*Bürgerlichen Kälte*) as a contemporary emotional state that citizens use to protect themselves from the violence they themselves cause<sup>4</sup>. *Bourgeois coldness* involves controlling emotional regulation and managing empathy, allowing for intense feelings while at the same time justifying indifference towards the suffering of others. Aesthetic experiences for an interesting, differentiated life and controlled, measured affects are OK. We feel sadness and outrage, we have empathy or sympathy for activists like Carola Rackete, or we look at art about people drowning in the Mediterranean. The aesthetic experience even suggests to us that we have dealt with the issue. We are engaged, and therefore we are on the morally right side.

Being progressive, empathetic and morally on the right side is fundamental to the bourgeois subject and its self-image. The problem with this present emotional state, according to Kohpeiß, is that it distracts from the structural and political framework (such as the European Union's external border policy) and from the violence that individuals not only perpetually accepts through this *social technology* (*Sozialtechnologie*), but from which they often profit through their institutional entanglements. She speaks of the present and, in particular, of institutions as training camps for coldness.

One thing is clear: the solution to this problem is not to be compensated by creating bourgeois warmth.

The use of *Cuteness* could also be interpreted as an aesthetic and escapist attempt to get away from bourgeois coldness. However, the presence of a certain broken cuteness in the setting today may simply be understood as an acknowledgment of a society permeated by coldness.

### **Everything that is built up must also be taken down again**

In the presidential suite of the Riu Plaza Berlin, you can see a collaboration between Michael Amstad / Marte Eknæs and myself, which will at a later date be presented in a different format.

Marte and Micha had already presented a live feed of thermographic images of the traffic island at Ernst Reuter Platz in 2022 as part of *DOOM SPA CITY WEST 1: Zum Schönen Knie mit Temperature*. Marte's sculpture *Inflatable* also floated in the fountain basin of the circular square during the exhibition. In the short film *Lifeworld*<sup>5</sup> by Michael Amstad and Marte Eknæs (2025), which was recently screened by DOOM SPA, the artwork *Inflatable* is given an inner and outer life – and a voice of its own. It dreams of escaping its existence as an exhibition object and, in this existential crisis, seeks advice from Keller Easterling, among others. Easterling then talks to the artwork about failure, damage and the moment when an artwork, having fulfilled its function, can be discarded and returned to its separate parts and materials: wood, plastic, electricity, canvas and paint... She urges *Inflatable* to find comfort in this.

I have made my peace with the eternal cycle of idea, financing, production, transport (there), install, opening, exhibition, dismantling, transport (back), storage or disposal, be it in the life cycle of a sculpture, a sauna or even an exhibition space.

This reminds me that the generic garden shed and sauna at DOOM SPA were taken over by three very nice men from Ukraine at the end of the exhibition for the purpose of its use in an allotment garden in Berlin Marzahn. The dismantling took seven hours and coincided with DOOM SPA's final, involuntary move out. At the end, they packed numerous building materials, a large piece of artificial turf, water hoses, empty and half-full beverage crates, our refrigerator and one of the two bottles of Finnish vodka (the one we forgot at the opening) into the Amazon Prime van that one of their sons drives during the day.

As I write this, a sip from the second bottle of vodka warms me.  
In the face of the New Ice Age DOOM SPA will no longer serve champagne.

Today you will have the opportunity to participate in a raffle and win the *Safe Tonight* pillow by Anna Hofmann.

Translated with the help of DeepL.com (free version)

Roseline Rannoch

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<sup>1</sup> *Bits and pieces*, Mathieu Dafflon and Leevi Toija, Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Basel, 2025

<sup>2</sup> Lustiges Taschenbuch LTB Nr. 133 - *Die neue Eiszeit*, Ehapa Verlag, Berlin, 1989, p. 5-70

<sup>3</sup> Adorno, T. W.: *Erziehung nach Auschwitz*. In T. W. Adorno, *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971 [1966], p.88–104

<sup>4</sup> Henrike Kohpeiß: *Bürgerliche Kälte Affekt und koloniale Subjektivität*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2023, p.187-213

<sup>5</sup> *Lifeworld*, Michael Amstad and Marte Eknæs, video, 2025, 13 min.