

## Santo Tolone *Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, Spades= Cuori, Quadri, Fiori, Picche Come Quando Fuori Piove= As When Outside, Rain* 17 September – 31 October 2015

Anarchist Evening at the Magic Theatre. For Madmen Only. Price of Admission Your Mind”

This is a game that cannot be won.

The invitation to the Magic Theatre was received by Harry Haller in Hermann Hesse’s novel *Steppenwolf*. Sounds a bit like a dorm room poster now, but the meaning carries. The theatre is only of the mind and only a crazy person would really want to know what’s going on in the darkest and deepest reaches of their psyche. The question here is how willing are you to see what’s on the other side of the curtain.

Here we have a theatre, a game, but first a waiting room. Purgatorial bureaucracy and unsure authority. Perhaps Kafka might be better to invoke here, but let’s stick with Hesse. Do you wait? Do you pass through? If you wait, get frustrated, and leave, this becomes about that. But if you push through, granting yourself the power to do so, when passing the barrier you realize the show has already begun.

Just beyond, a video of a mysterious curtain, slightly crumpled, shifts around something in the center, very slowly lifting the stratus of fabric.

Further on, this almost looks like an art gallery, excepting these curtains move back and forth. With each shift, an artwork is hidden and another is revealed. In the center, a sculpture made of pieces from semi-disposable Swedish furniture creaks and moves with each swish.

There, a sky of bananas. There a chess player is lost in a mind game of shifting shapes. A simple cartoony joke on the left disappears into abstract lines. Here a false ceiling is a false ceiling, fallen to a brightly colored shape on the wall like a forgotten Ellsworth Kelly and not a ceiling at all.

The game and theatre here are only in your mind. Can you decipher the abstraction of the chess-player even with a hint? Do you recognize the IKEA Lack coffee table’s parts in the sculpture in the center? Do you see that space has shifted in the false ceiling tile or do you only see an abstract work of art? Can you tell that the sky is made of bananas, their shapely forms traced into clouds?

If you made it as far as passing the waiting room, we can assume you’ll figure your way through this.

We don’t think that you’ll lose your mind in this one. The author of this maze is gentle, funny, peculiar, and a little lascivious (what exactly is moving that curtain in the video?), but his intention is not to make you a lunatic. But you have to a little crazy to even see these as games, to understand this as a performance starring you, to push past the waiting room and truly see what each work hides.

The game cannot be won, only revealed.

Collectively these ludic works create an atmosphere. Like the suits of playing cards transforming into a mnemonic device of weatherly declaration.

As when outside, rain.

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