The Prototype.

The first thing I wished to paint was an angel because it is the guardian above the bed of a child. It could be the first image they see, their first painting and eventually even their first view into an exterior imagination, into another world, or possibly behind.

So I wanted this imagined guardian to be the first image made for this exhibition and then see what will be "demanded" in the process as the next one, and hopefully more of the same image, hoping to having invoked a prototype by such an exercise and then to be following this prototype of the first angel in all the later works, presuming it as the prototype for all the images in the exhibition, still considering to having to develop one and the first exhibition painting and the first real baby painting too.

A prototype is in relation to serial production, but the series are still being made as the application of a certain craft, those serial originals might enhance the feeling of cinematic movement. The long and painful time spent within the rituals before the "birth" of the first image, the prototype, all this I tried many times before, but here I added and followed, although still little, some of the rules I have been learning recently from studying ages old scripts for the training of Russia's mystical icon painters. I understood that somehow I was restricted by my rejection and fear of idolatry to use the typical byzantine painters subject matters with the necessary faith and intensity. But I found out during my own introspection that maybe I could develop such interior and necessary faith when projecting an angel and to my huge surprise, while looking up in the old icon school books I read, that it was the rule that in the second step of the training the scholar was asked to paint an angel and only later include other sacred persons or "objects". It should be most natural to almost anyone to imagine the angel and to have faith in it, but as well to invoke one and as a result of such exercise to establish its helpful and inspiring presence for further works as an artist.

Though I realized the decision was not to try to make icons, or credulously assuming such a role model for myself too fast, but to, at the very least, be able to reproduce some sort of reminder or echo, trig--gering a memory of them, remembering and recounting the model of the really observant icon-painter who isn't supposed to claim doing-icons for ones own benefit. The fear of doing idolatry and the fear of doing heresy was becoming a balancing-act.

and the fear of doing heresy was becoming a balancing-act. I was learning to understand that the central understanding of the icon practice is to see oneself as writer sitting on the table while making them and not as idolator painter having the plane of the painting on the wall and instead to emphasize on telling the story of a developing relationship to the subject matter of the image.

I knew there is no original prototype in the creation of art, so after combing and searching very long through the infinite amount of internet angels I found the one in the multi winged angel made by Theophanes, generally one of the most incredible byzantine painters. He painted it in the 14th century in the very special and short timed country of the Republic of Novgorod, a free medieval state far in the north of Russia. Theophanes himself referred to this prototype because it was the only image representation allowed in the First Temple in Jerusalem.

So at last I found the angel somehow, during production and through elaborate work times, strongly and almost entirely framed in the tin metal from contemporary Mexican icon painters. The metal appearance of the angels surrounding the soldered plane felt more and more like a reminder that the angels are contemporarily one of the most drawn subject matters in the entire world, particularly painted or tattooed by the many inflicted ones, by the prisoners, by people suffering incredible pains, or the ones feeling humiliated or feeling deeply abandoned and submitted to endless harsh and almost unpaid labor in all countries, those intensely seeking and praying for relief and for charity. Usually such depictions of the angels appear to be harsh and scary to the proud and educated ones, but paradoxically the harder they look the closer they are in fact to the true angelic spirit of charity. Once being given such an angelic license to paint them, it starts appearing while working on them, to be an incredibly great angelic mercy in itself to being permitted such a perfect labor.

Relating to the artist's eternal incompatibility of combining text and image/object, the tin was purchased in a Mexican folk art store for the making of tin icons which distinguish between the forbidden image of sensual worldly life and the parts cut out that expose the holy objects and bodies represented in the traditional icon. But the artist goes one step back and closes the holes of the tin back up to make any gaze towards even the potentially holy image impossible, in an attempt to reinvestigate the motivations of iconoclasm. In his last edition the artist created a veil for May Magazine possibly used by the collector to cover the face, this second and new edition is to create a kind of veil for our misuse of images, possibly to cover secular images or better any images in the collectors environment in order not to just protect the image but more so the gaze of the observer.

As in many of my last exhibitions I kept exploring (in psychoanalytical terms, as if tracing the origins of trauma) how and with what kind of experience it all started and happened that I became an artist. Or from my later perspective such attempt should be called finding an inherent or interior biographical motive that may have elevated me into that very privileged position of serving the "world" or rather the particular community with the results of my art reflections. Looking back to an experience that supplies me with a new context of self-understanding in my role as an artist, I remembered the few east European icon paintings that were placed in some less prominent walls of the house I grew up in, I as well associate their slightly smug treatment and embarrassed reactions. But most of all I think of their "touching" that resurfaces now. Submitting myself to react to such early "touch" I often develop procedures of repetition (similar to previously repetitively writings like one on biblical Josef's flight from his family) as a psychoanalytic act of recovery.
I divided the production of these paintings into different stages of work and duration, beginning with very quickly, almost automatically-executed drawings on canvas, covering them with tin. The aim is to avoid too much intentionality, or to avoid the influence of my own subjectivity, or in iconographic terms my own sensual sinfulness. I try then, instead, to echo the more specific issues the orthodox practice of "iconography" might imply, in hoping to finally being able to cross a line from a mostly conceptual contemporary art production into the promises of the traditions of such "folklore" to trigger - although in paradox - the subjective turn by negating the idolatries of purely secular art. The title of each of the 23 works is Angel plus the number counted in chronological order, meaning each is assumed to be a recount of one and the same memory of an image I saw long ago, an original Russian icon, representing an angel, or what is, in this case, called a "Seraph" the multiwinged Angel that is not protected from the gaze of the observer by the wings. It could be an infinite labor to do such an exercise, but I had been stopped at number 23 when the transport deadline for the exhibition became due. I liked very much this certain one famous and often reproduced and copied painting that depicts the Seraph because it is as if executed not only in very abstract ways as it shows it with actually many wings, the many-winged angel, but because it was painted in purely very light and few warm colors, in that way, having to negate and to turn away from my own tendency to paint in dark and more gothic tones. I believed trying to paint similarily would relief me from my typical more depressive and monochrome application of colors and thus change not only the canvas but my own self during the process in a deeper and long lasting way. It is not only the strange light or the darkness that I found and enjoyed increasingly, but as well the exercise of making an image as if the painting becomes a window to an interior outside. Already as a child I was surely subversively attracted by the slight embarrassment these icons that were brought in as gifts from eastern Europe received at our house and were placed in on walls not too prominent. But now copying and recounting as well those icon memories I could experience their transgressive power of the abject, the misfitting, being exactly that what might have been one of the forces of influence. I became attracted by the idea of the totally obsolete and devotional service, and the self-sacrifice of true orthodox icon-painters, their somehow most radical charge to the idea of being an artist, compared to the one of my own. Though, I realized the decision was not to try to make icons, or credulously assuming such an role model for myself too fast, but at the very least, to be able to reproduce some sort of reminder or echo, triggering a memory of them, remembering and recounting the model of the really observant icon-painter who isn't supposed to claim doing-icons for ones own benefit. The fear of doing idolatry and the fear of doing heresy was be-co m-

Making Icons.
Maybe it is just the very grey very rainy plus icy days window view that suggest the time is good for my very traditional reappropriations of penitence, the desire to even find something in the lost time, possibly a kind of final time. The vision of having pleasure in attempting to practice even in the most loose terms the reappropriation of Byzantine or old East European icon art making might be resulting from such moods. Liking something complicated, something that contains quite many ingredients that are not very attractive in fact both sensually as intellectually but have a strange and sincere gravity like very serious songs that are not sounding too pleasurable would have, songs that might be entitled in Alfred Schnittke words, "songs purely contained with notes only that are full of grief." The content would not be the easy grief of the failures of the outside world but the ones living their own interior and then particularly the ones that are result of their own failed acts suddenly revealed in their deepest mistakeness. All the painted holy figures represented in them put away there are at least those that depict the angels that might be somehow appealing to me. Mostly it is the Archangel Michael, to be recognized as the one who has the sword. He is the one who kills the devil actually. I have found one image where the Michael is huge and covering the whole space in the middle and there is as well a little man on the left looking up to the angel. This man is grey and looks like any man. He looks high up to the Angel's face who holds the sword obviously ready to pierce it into the little man the next moment. I did not know who the man is until now I read about it. Before I thought the man is like me, small and looking up with hope, maybe the last hope, to be saved from misery by the supernatural appearance. So I accepted my mistake to read it correctly when seeing it on my screen every day where I had put it possibly unconsciously, randomly for later moments of self revelation maybe. To choose an object without knowledge and intention would not have such effect on oneself later on. I just would not pick an image with the knowledge of its definition like the little man on the right is the devil for my screen. But rather as someone who somehow seems to refer to my condition of hoping for an angel and iden identifying with the small man and learning long time later this me on the right side was the impersonification and the origin of all evil. Such is the icon reading of art. But who would seriously apply our contemporary fashion of the reading an art object to such a clumsy image. Contemporary but not in an art interpretation way was possibly that I sometimes thought about the question of the angel's projected gender. The question came through in this one case as well but I failed to meditate that seriously enough, I often did so, but did not stay long with such questioning. For now I believe Michael should be more named Archangel Michaela, Raffael, who was much more important in my life's emergency invocations should as well be better named Archangel Raffaela. Gabriel is Gabriel to me. I did not invocate Gabriel in fact so much. He was more the one that appears sometimes in confusion without invocation. He has a deep slow voice that might appear to me for instance in leading through the crisis of finding a title for a work and even trying to find a good one, a clear and simple one. His voice appeared not under his name but as well as Moctezuma for instance, or rather as Nezahualcoyotl, who probably appears as well under name of Moctezuma I must assume or otherwise before that as always as King David. They all helped with the typical same voice as one and then in troubles of last and important decision making within new work. The same voice appearance made me later after some practice assume with quite some precision it is all Archangel Gabriel. I observed as well the name for the apparition was the depending on the geographic position during the suffering invocation. In the Mediterranean it was clearly a matter of David, once Socrates, but in Mexico and maybe all Americas it is Moctezuma. They all as mentioned here befriend with poets and are most understanding to their production pains that are comparably small but nevertheless heavy enough productive sorrows. Some work that has had to be done and accomplished soon but moments before already confusing regrets take place then it's time for Gabriel to get in for help and for an often astonishing simple clear answer. The more personal agonies regarding being an artist in general feeling unsupported for instance or feeling exhausted both from production or from non productivity these conditions should be better a case for the healing of Archangel Raffaela. Who is referenced with green color and who appears to be generally so very close now. Some days ago I had to give the title for the exhibition and was in the usual helplessness between different approaches, I had a clear but abstract idea through all the work. So I had many titles that came somehow close to the whole work but nothing was good for the intense story I tried to tell for all the long last months. I sent one title in but not still having some pains with it, not having really explored the title problem to the very end. On this same evening something started taking care of me without my awareness, obviously something not really me, directed me to listen again to the old same companion of my work from the very beginning of my days, Gyorgy Ligeti again believing it might be helpful to some of the new works. I noticed the name of one composition again, "Aventures" and an hour later the title of a second piece called "Nouveau Aventures" a later composition of him. It was just a moment and without considering that I read the name of this to even to me still unheard of work of Ligeti. Later in the night I suddenly was woken up as if a noise was the reason and not an internal dream struggle and as in all my awaken times of night I gazed at the pale urban light illuminating the patterns of my beloved curtain. In fact I incorporated into some of the representations of my abstract sublimation icon project those patterns that are very dear and special to me when night sorrows become so dark and I looked at it again but then I looked more towards the side more to the empty wall those few seconds after awakening and then I heard the voice giving the title and as matter of factly as always and a bit humorously saying the title should be better "Tears and New Tears". The influence of the Archangel is not only a clear but somehow non represented voice and it is helping more in a combination of a situation of feeling lost and of readiness to invocation and it is not a clear order but the last step in a chain of steps lead from the beginning by the exterior influence and ending with the clear and helpful and short statement. In one case for instance the apparition was so simple and obvious. I was in Mexico that moment and started with our very helpful and previously completely unintended jewelry production, that I assumed then was the influence of the always helpful presence of David. But when becoming so unsure if jewelry is not too much referencing luxury and therefore something that I am supposed to avoid strictly as early although not willingly self determined nomad artist and part time nomad writer. I suddenly felt that the inclusion of text and of words would keep away the spirit of such luxury idolatry, but all my general biographical issues as an artist that I should be very observant with. Worse so I still had no title for the company and the whole challenge of the fundamentally new production. In the night just before the go ahead I woke up between the typical 2 and 3 am and my opening eyes saw the slow and gravitationally moving shadow patterns of the branches of the wonderful Mexican garden trees within the two nightly illuminated windows. It created such marvel compounded with the slight awe typically convoying it in such impression of a night window still my eyes drifted away following other shadow lines more on the wall until I turned away my gaze more towards in between the windows to the wall, more towards the left window side and I heard the same deep sound mentioned before saying simple and clear "why don't you just call it Montezuma". Yes, I even remember he said Montezuma with an n in fact not with a c as I would say it trying to be correct. Making something what I surely illegitimately call icons means lots of hard and often very toxic labor. I have to say it because I liked that my works now are done now in a way that it seems they are exclusively containing issues of labor and of time only and not at all considerations of value or of reference to name just two for instance. It is as if the pure concentration on the labor moment is taking away so much pretensions of art work that I and I guess many others suffer from so much in our times. One of my favorite ideas is the question of duration and of the point of interruption of duration that are called events. I believe focusing during work only on the event, on the present and not on duration would lead the work away from misleading conceptualization but as well from any symbolism and reference that is easy to achieve. I burn the material that contains lead sometimes and as I have to do them on a desk in order to feel the same way as if writing I usually inhale all the poisonous steam that comes in a straight line gravitating without fail directly into my nose in moments of bending down in deep focus and I only know that I must hold the nose quiet and cannot escape with my nose because the concentration and the achievement of space/time event focus during the labor duration time would be lost. The smell is certainly alarming too to the instincts but I tell myself that this must under all circumstances be accepted more so as it might be an order of penitence to be made for my earlier pleasures with the worst human stench I indulged so badly in. I am very endeared as well by the step making process that came with the acceptance of the order of the ancient icon production model. The tin has to be prepared first. It has to be rolled and flattened again and again in a procedure that might look wild and mad and before the step of doing applying the hot soldering stick. It always felt like a development from the deepness of pains and using the fire for the sake of bending the regretted acts with the pains of heat and fires until the transformed material arrives ready to get under the good healing influence of the color application at the very end of the process. This step procedure came to me just surely unconsciously but one day I asked Damon to come over to help me again in a bad deadline trouble. He came in with some kind of black sword that looked just disgusting. He found it on the street directly at the door of my house. It was probably a old instrument for moving the fire in the chimneys. It looked so awful to me as all those house instruments look to me, alien and scary, and as a typical German well made object of discomfort and torture. Some people like to put many of these objects in their houses. But to me it is like bringing something very dirty to an otherwise deserted nomadic space. I was very angry of Damon for a first second disgusted that he made my happy anticipation of his company so miserable the first moment he walks in. I did not know where to put it. But then I tried being polite and pretending to be joyful and looked at it with feigned interest and discovered the metal bullet on top and we both immediately knew it will be a helpful and welcomed instrument during the first step of the icon production and for us to flatten my tin before applying it to the frame. It was as if it came straight from a deep Germanic hell and so I called it without a moment of hesitation the "Devil's Sceptor" and from then on it made itself so useful in the work of the first stage, the events of torturing the so valued and expensive material for heralding the creation of these later becoming so sublime and in traditional sense truly abstract icons. Although I wished here to be the prosecutor so much of my life here or better to say I am wishing to be the helper or the intern for those prosecutors who are convinced increasingly and rightly so that I might be an inferior or bad person, still I should add to this, that as about almost everything else in my life, I am always still feeling so very blessed and so very much privileged in everything so abundantly and therefore full of deepest gratitude. The same experience of gratitude is even more true when it comes to the sudden opportunity that came up these days that I can have the self inflicted opportunity to write these few pages of regret and of hopefully intense confessioning. Therefore today, this morning now, during this last day of confessing things I feel very sad suddenly I had only a few days time for it, in fact few mornings only to excel in the exercise. Of course I will try to continue to make it my daily exercise in the future still to write every morning a few hours about all the disgraceful and iniquitous errors I had made and about all the deviations they caused, but I am afraid the intensity that comes from the knowledge of being very transparent particular to the judges and prosecutors will be lost all together with the feeling of urgency that comes from a printer waiting angrily for the writer to go speedily ahead with the writing and just push the send button finally. This combination of perceived anger and of judgement waiting behind everything I do, should become the really greatest pleasure and I learned through the process to accept it with gratitude but unfortunately I learned as well that many artists don't share such secret gratitude that comes from such painful but dutiful experience of self negation. So it is my last of many mornings before I go finishing the very extensive and hard labor of what I tried to be icons of my penitence, with the intense but quite only last hope left to me, that those icons would turn into good objects outside of me and would become kind of emotional support objects for some who might afford to support the strange ways of my artists lives wishing to have them close to them.