THE SCOTSMAN

Art

Chiara Camoni: murmur, buzz, hiss and rub, Cample Line, near Thornhill ★★★★

Ash Rise, John Hope Gateway, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh ★★★★

Richard Forster: Ost..!, Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh ★★★★

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At the Ingleby Gallery, Yorkshire-based artist **Richard Forster** is also engaged in meticulous acts of making. Forster's signature style is what he calls "photocopy realism", manipulating source material on a photocopier and then reproducing the result as a meticulous pencil drawing. For this show, he is making three-dimensional objects as well, focussing on a subject which has been important to him for some years: "ostalgie" – nostalgia for life in Communist East Germany (DDR).

At the centre of the show is a series of sculptures, re-made versions of East German products cast in jesmonite, resin and aluminium, from Spee washing powder packets to a bubble lampshade and an Orienta radio, as well as figurines from DDR pop culture such as the sandman and the cosmonaut. Each object is posed on an exact reproduction of the cardboard box in which it was delivered.

There are also two series of drawings: one reproducing photographs of events around the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the other colour stills from the East German stop-motion animation Unser Sandmannchen, paired with children's drawings and the logos of obsolete East German brands. These drawings are so polished they look like digital reproductions; the crucial thing is they are not.

The art of obsessively detailed reproduction has its placein the contemporary canon, but always begs the question "why?" It's not exactly the wrong question, as it may well be the one the artist is trying to answer with each meticulous mark they make. Forster has made a series of copies which are so real they are almost more real than the things they imitate. It's as if he's gone through realism and come out the other side, asking: what is authenticity? What is memory? What is the true nature of connection to places and things?



Installation view of Richard Forster's exhibition OST..! at the Ingleby Gallery in Edinburgh | Courtesy of the Ingleby Gallery