

Clages

Brüsseler Straße 5
D-50674 Köln
T + 49.221.99209181
F + 49.221.1794288
office@mariettaclages.de
www.mariettaclages.de

Christian Theiß | RE IN AN KA RA

04 Sep - 31 Oct 2020

Prosthesis is an act of addition and attachment, the procedure of completing and reassembling something together. Christian Theiß' work often uses that logic of expansion in an attempt to retrieve and reopen the meaning attached to objecthood. Acting within the lineage of assemblage Theiß combines consumer objects and signs from different ecologies and plays with their varied circuits of circulation. Systems of symbols, the metrics and design of known and invisible human history flow from one group of works to the next. In that sense the exhibition counters the reconstructive process of creating meaning and then letting it die out.

In the gallery's front room, a largescale installation consisting of individual metal plates of 30 x 30 cm is placed on the floor. Growing out of the metal surface are reworked walking sticks that have lost their path. Their form and function appear to be misused. Instead of guiding someone they have now obtained independence and have opted for the life of a secret dancer. The distinctive archaeologies of knowledge implemented here showcase an acute ability of working with memories and time. Each of the objects Theiß dismantles and reassesses, whether it's walking sticks, telephones, taxidermy animals, trashcans, or filling material such as polyurethane and cement, maintains partially its status as a part of this world, holds on to what makes it undentifiable. Yet its schematic specificity, the transparent meaning attached to matter, is manipulated and cracked open to all sorts of new possibilities.

Another group of works includes references to ancient Egyptian archaeology and Greek mythology. Mythos is a traditional or legendary story. Something usually concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation, in particular one that is concerned with deities or demigods that is trying to explain some practice, rite and phenomenon of nature. The realm of myth therefore functions as an allegorical state.

An allegory is a story that doesn't have to be true. It is a fictional tale created out of fear, in an attempt to explain and understand the world around us. There's a great divide talked about from historians and philosophers that happened during ancient history that's called a transition from the age of the Myth to the age of Reason. The political implications regarding the reception and perception of ancient Greek culture have been greatly analyzed and critiqued throughout the years. This body of works acts upon that complicated transitional period, moving from fear in the face of the unknown towards honesty of logic. Theiß is almost always in a position to retrieve the memory of the object that once was and cracks it. His accumulative process leaves the window open, so that a walking-stick or a garbage can or taxidermy animals or even store-bought cheap vases remain visible.

But they have ceased to exist as the material and functional object they used to be. They have fallen victims of a process of emotional disfigurement, where their form and purpose has been recharged. These constructions seem to highlight the tension between fact and fiction referencing a culture of memory and a habit of forgetfulness. Holding on to his dancing-stick he topples and tumbles over a minefield of bright red poppies. A stupid boy looks at him from across the room. He's made out of bronze and his eyes are hollow. With the tenderness he was blessed with by his mother, the legendary Venus with a fur the stupid boy tries to capture him and lock him away, but he manages to escape and hide on the first floor. Quickly rushing by an all-white room that reminds him of the life he used to live he reaches the top of Mount Olympus and quickly cries out the following words of wisdom as his journey reaches its devastating end:

"If you are curious don't wait.
Take a trip there.
Find it.
It's somewhere out there in the woods waiting.
Ready to head into the unknown?
No.
Let's go then."

Haris Giannouras