

Kaspar Müller - *Fünf Figuren*
20 December 2022 - 28 January 2023

Société is pleased to announce *Fünf Figuren*, a solo show by the Swiss artist Kaspar Müller. The exhibition comprises of five straw figures inhabiting the gallery. Built at a scale slightly larger than life-sized, these blurry bodies enact what Müller calls “psychological behavioral blueprints.” Each figure performs a simple, archetypal gesture: one points at visitors, another gives a stop signal, while still others appear to purposefully stride through the space or crawl on all fours.

As a material, straw sparks myriad associations. Considered within the arc of Müller’s practice more broadly, which looks at the relationships between economy and craft, straw possesses a dual status as a practical commodity and nonfunctional decoration. Its uses as bedding, building materials, and animal forage are practically engrained in the European DNA, while also making it one of the earliest commodities. Straw continues to be used today for decorative ornamentation, yet historically possessed a quasi-supernatural function in its use to create talismans to ward against illness or ensure health and prosperity. Recreating the human form in such an unceremonious and time-worn material emphasizes the feelings of empathy that people tend to have towards abstract, inanimate figures—a sort of reaffirmation of similarity through difference, not unlike Müller’s ongoing work with his blown glass orbs. Yet while his orbs have a reflective quality that captures their surroundings, his straw figures have an absorptive capacity: they soak up the space around them and, like the metaphorical *straw man*, divert your attention.

Kasper Müller (b. 1983, Schaffhausen) lives and works in Berlin and Zurich. Müller has had solo exhibitions at Vleeshal, Middelburg; Kunsthalle Bern; Museum im Bellpark, Kriens; Kunsthalle Zürich; and Centre d’Art Contemporain, Lausanne. He has participated in group exhibitions at Fondazione Prada, Venice; Casa Masaccio, San Giovanni Valdarno; Swiss Institute, New York; Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome; MAMCO, Geneva; and Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, among other venues.