

Fabian Marti

Such a Good Girl

Exhibition 17 January - 7 March 2020

Opening on Thursday, 16 January 2020, 6 PM, Rentrée du Quartier des Bains

Fabian Marti sees his artistic work as a chance to explore ideas about the place of the artist and the individual in society and in the field of production. This type of questioning, which brings him closer to conceptual art, allows Marti to view his practice as a way of challenging the divides between traditional techniques, conventional modes of creation, customary terms of exchange right through to the artist's status. He goes back to more archaic technical choices, and the handmade in particular, reappropriating craft skills such as ceramics. As for the shift in the artist's function, Marti is involved and participates in the creation of exhibition spaces, artists' studios and publishing houses. The Zurich space Hacienda, *TwoHotel*, *Marti Collection*, *Marti Ceramics* and *FM Studio Chairs* are simultaneously both art objects and small "companies", places or structures that facilitate production projects, both for Fabian Marti himself and for invited artists. Beyond this community engagement, Marti draws on references in his work that stem as much from art history as from primitive cultures or the occult. He mixes geometric motifs and symbols that could equally be likened to op art as to tribal art. His highly graphic, black-and-white collages and prints create a hypnotic effect, while his totemic objects are inspired by practices that flirt with notions revisited today, esotericism, magic or the sacred. In a fluid world where new beliefs are mingled with digital capacities that expand possibilities and heighten mystery, Marti researches and experiments, immersing himself in a flux of interwoven knowledge, fascination and impact on his individual narrative.

Favoured recurring signs gradually merge with the artist's experience, the solitary, slower observation of everyday life, oscillating between the comforting effect of repetition and anxiety linked to the passage of time. Marti films himself each day, transforming the invasive practice of the selfie and self-promotion into a systematic video recording of his daily acts and gestures, with *I.L.N. Chapter 1 (Stories 2017-2019)*, reminding us of On Kawara's *Dates Paintings*, in their slow and inexorable movement towards his inevitable demise.

I.L.N., the abbreviation of a title in the Bernese dialect that Marti has used several times, *I LÄBE NO*, which can be translated as "I am still alive", constitutes a very personal story, which, unlike On Kawara's work, recreates his life. More generally, it connects Marti's references with more trivial and intimate aspects of daily life: his encounters, museum visits, evenings or journeys. Everything is filmed, reproduced and variously shown as many times as Marti videos his life, taking this act of self-promotion to its very limits and transforming himself into a character. Repeating the same "subject", filmed in many different settings, produces a comic effect, turning him into a kind of artist-Tintin-traveller. He is gradually effaced by these proliferating camera shots, which focus instead on backgrounds and soundscapes, emerging as the prime information sources. This incessant and invasive flood of images implies that *I.L.N.* is pushing experimentation to its absolute limits, testing the boundaries of the medium, the resistance of identity to non-stop recording and the thresholds of depersonalisation and derealisation. The individual episodes are not expressions of the long progression towards death as in the *Dates*

Paintings, still very physical, but rather its dilution in the flow of images, with the artist himself being transformed into a totally timeless, digital ghost, neither living nor dead, but virtual.

Such a Good Girl, the limited edition made in conjunction with the CEC, outlines the shape of the artist's dog, held at arm's length. This two-dimensional figure in brass is wall-hung, suspended in a void, transformed into a sign. The lines are stylized and pared-down, reminiscent of an emblem or a coat of arms. The gesture reproduced, that of a female dog holding her puppy by the scruff of its neck, hovers between affection and authority. Marti puts his dog on display as he does so for himself. His dog has been the subject of several artworks, photographs, *Stories Instagram*, *Lutz & the Sunset Tower*, *Lutz & Kronenhalle*, *Lutz & the Hanged Man*, *Lutz & Dresseur d'Animaux*, *Lutz & I'm a Good Boy*, *Lutz & Spidey*, all subtitles from the *I LÄBE NO* series. The artist gives him the status of a muse, drifting towards anthropomorphism, conferring on him a feminine role that is, to say the least, dated, quirky and open to question.

Turned into a transitional object, a mirror and repository of the artist's obsessions and addictions, *Such a Good Girl*, with its gleaming, shiny surface, will become marked during the production process with the imprints of hands, caresses and manipulations, stigmata of this dependence, midway between attachment and rejection.

Such a Good Girl, multiple, brass, handprints of the artist and the paw prints of his dog, lemon juice concentrate, 1000 × 645 × 6 mm, edition of 8, 1 H.C. 1 special example (E.S.), 1 A.P and a prototype, numbered, dated and initialled FM, punched on the back of the mounting plate. Coedition Wilde and the Centre d'édition contemporaine, Geneva, 2020.

Fabian Marti (born Fribourg, 1979, lives and works in Los Angeles) has been invited to produce several solo exhibitions, notably in Zurich at the Gallery Peter Kilchmann in 2014 and 2019, at the Wilde/Art Bärtschi & Cie gallery, Geneva in 2014 and 2018 and at the Galleria Fonti, Naples in 2015 and 2018. Also at Paradise Garage, Venice/CA in 2012, Wallriss, Fribourg, Centre Pasquart, Biel/Bienne, at HHDM, Vienna in 2013, at the Kunstmuseum Winterthur and the Kunstverein Braunschweig in 2011, and at Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-les-Eaux and the Kunstmuseum Luzern in 2016. Several solo exhibitions are planned, in 2020 at the gallery O-Town House, Los Angeles and in 2021 at the Kunstmuseum Bern. He has also participated in several group exhibitions, at the Kunsthaus in Aarau and the Swiss Institute in Rome in 2012, at the Kunsthalle in Vienna, the Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, the Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna and at Forde, Geneva in 2013, at the Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Witte de With, Rotterdam and the Truth and Consequences gallery, Geneva in 2014, at the Swiss Institute, New York in 2015; at Karma International and Evergreene Studio, Los Angeles in 2016; at the Francesca Pia gallery, Zurich, Hauser & Wirth, London, for the Burger Collection Hong Kong at the Langen Foundation, Neuss in 2018 and at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in 2019. In 2011, he was invited to the Venice Biennale and in 2018 to the Busan Biennale.

Fabian Marti's exhibition is supported by Pro Helvetia, the Swiss foundation for culture, and the edition is co-produced with Wilde, Geneva.

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