

Working in a variety of media like sculpture, installation, painting, photography and video, Ugo Rondinone has been continuously addressing transient and ephemeral phenomena of time, fleeting emotions and momentous changes in atmosphere and moods of a place. During the last years the artist has captured these themes in a series of sculptures using different methods of casting. Motifs of Rondinone's sculptural series range from genres classical of art history, such as still lifes and nudes, to redefined archetypical forms of primitive art: masks, large abstracted heads and animal figures. The artist reinvents these motifs in different scales and materials and plays with multiple historic and visual references, translating these timeless images in the contemporary art context.

In the current exhibition the transformed space of the gallery becomes the stage for the new sculptures by Ugo Rondinone: 34 bronze-cast figures of horses individual in their forms and sizes. The plywood flooring spreads across the rooms of the gallery, uniting the space and introducing an active natural element into the white-cube environment. The white washed windows diffuse the daylight and isolate the exhibition from the world outside. A suspended translucent disc of a stained-glass clock decorates some of the windows. These coloured, perfectly divided clock-faces, stripped of their hands, augment the impression of an arrested time and isolated environment.

The gallery, which appears now to be transformed into a time capsule, is occupied by small figures of horses, each of them facing a different direction. These unique sculptures were modelled in clay and moulded by the artist himself, then cast in bronze and left raw after the casting. Both the uniqueness and the rough, hand-made character of the sculptures are emphasised by the titles given to each of the works. Introducing a romantic undertone to the show these titles, or rather names, refer to primordial natural phenomena: "the lava", "the cosmos", "the foliage", "the sunrise" etc.

Although the exhibition seems to play with modernist means of expression like the materiality of bronze sculpture, contrasts of wood and bronze surfaces, the reappearing motif of a horse (that bears one of the longest traditions in art history), the collage and interplay of all these elements in the show brings in a subversive sentimental and popular twist characteristic of works by Ugo Rondinone. The works on display in "primal" follow the series of bronze cast bird sculptures shown in 2012 in the exhibitions "primitive" at the Common Guild, Glasgow and Art Unlimited, Basel. The artist's appropriation and redefinition of classical and archetypical images in bronze and aluminium casts continues the line of his earlier "Nude", "Moonrise" and olive tree sculptures and works in the on-going "still life" series.

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