

The exhibition „On Cuteness" examines the phenomenon of cuteness and its variegated manifestations in contemporary art. Under the term „cuteness", artworks are brought together that to different degrees reveal aspects of cuteness, which are, however, based on differing concepts. Some works explicitly make use of manifestations associated with cuteness, for example, the anthropomorphic, naive or infantile, and are characterised by an impetus to exaggerate. Others follow the language of cartoons or reveal aspects of cuteness only when taking a closer look. What they have in common, though, is that they cannot be fixated under the term „cuteness".

The starting point of the show is the dichotomous notion – still to be found in contemporary considerations on kitsch and also cuteness – that these manifestations are to be conceived as adversaries of a „critical" or „serious" artistic practice, or even as „resistance" against the still zombie-like persisting idea of „avant-garde". The mentioned aesthetic categories are attributed an ambivalence, as if something disreputable resonated in them; something that at least triggers contradictory feelings.

In contrast to these notions that locate cuteness merely as the opposite or against the foil of alleged „criticality" and „seriousness" – probably convinced of having to help it gain relevance and legitimisation – the exhibition understands cuteness as an independent manifestation. But since cuteness – like, for example, ugliness, kitsch and seriousness – is a category that is to a high degree subject to taste, the show grasps itself as a field of experimentation, in which this phenomenon is approached. In this sense, the works are merely placed next to the term, without insisting that they are in fact or intend to be „cute".

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