

Since 2011, he has pursued an extensive study of various aspects of primate research titled *Learning from Aping*. In the manner of an amateur scientist, he has already assembled a vast archive of literature and everyday objects related to primates as well as behavioral research, anthropology, and the presence of the ape in popular culture. He collects these materials and ultimately transforms them into works that demonstrate his understanding of the relationship between man and animal as an allegory of human behavior. *Learning to Love*, the title of the exhibition, is borrowed from the title of a book by Harry Harlow, an American psychologist and behavioral researcher who investigated the mother-child bond among apes with his “surrogate mothers” in the 1950s and 60s. These experiments provide the starting point for Pilet’s free associations on the mechanisms of love and attachment, friendship and dominance, cultural learning and assimilation processes. Guillaume Pilet says about his work: “I ape art” and thus refers simultaneously to mimesis, the inability to reproduce nature through art. With such light-footed gestures and metaphors, he comments nonchalantly on the major themes of life and art.

For his first institutional solo exhibition, he brings new works into a site-specific setting at Kunsthhaus Glarus and thus also calls into question the institution and its exhibition spaces. In the side-lit gallery, a space traditionally reserved for the presentation of sculpture, Guillaume Pilet presents a ceramic sculpture and painting, which take up the theme of classical museum-esque presentation while simultaneously counteracting this through the use of amateur ceramic and sponge painting techniques. Positioned in the center of the space is a large ceramic object titled *Zoo Manners* (2014) depicting a tea-drinking chimpanzee in the form of a fountain on top of a mirrored pedestal. The work refers, on the one hand, to an experiment in which the zoo animals learned to drink tea for the purpose of entertaining the public, and, on the other, also suggests references to art, for instance Bruce Nauman’s *Self Portrait as a Fountain* (1966-7), a self-portrait of the American conceptual artist as eternal font of inspiration. The sky-blue ceiling paint and a triptych of large-scale *Cage paintings* (2014) on the rear wall metaphorically reference the art system. The museum suddenly recalls a prison cell with bars on the windows. But in so doing, it is not necessarily clear how inside and outside, captivity and freedom are defined. Large-format *Cage-Paintings* (*Sunset*; *Wet Jungle*, 2014) are also installed in the stairwell, monopolizing the Kunsthhaus as an entire complex and hinting metaphorically at the art system in a tongue-in-cheek way.

In the spacious top lit gallery upstairs, Guillaume Pilet presents a complete installation consisting of various scenes from his experimental film *I Ape Therefore I Am*. The individual scenes originate from performances and studio scenarios. They all revolve around the relationship between animal and man, nature and culture, wildness and domestication, freedom and captivity, love and domination. A human-scale sculpture of a Cootie (a.k.a *The Unknown*, 2014), a fictional infectious

bacteria in the form of an insect, which was popular mainly as a children's toy in the 1950s and which Harlow used in his experiments as a symbol for "the unknown" lurks in this space as well as a Surrogate Mother (2014), a figure that Harlow repeatedly used as a safe haven for ape babies. In Harlow's experiments, ape babies were confronted with this frightening insect, allowing him to study how they deal with the unknown and fear. With the surrogate mother's repeated reassurance and encouragement, the ape baby successfully mastered its confrontation with the unknown.

On the basement level, Guillaume Pilet also presents *Learning to Love* (2013), a series of documentary-style photographs in which the artist imitates experiments from research literature that show, as in Harlow's case, man and animal—affectionately instructed, dominated, chained up, and playing around in nature. In the second space, Pilet also provides an insight into his archive, transforming it into a fictional presentation of an obsessive collection, titled *Learning from Aping – The Mind Map* (2014). Here, in turn, the borders between art and life, fiction and reality are blurred and the theme of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is raised once again.

Since graduating in 2010 with a master's degree in art from ECAL (Ecole cantonale d'art de Lausanne), Guillaume Pilet has presented his works in numerous solo exhibitions including at exhibition venues SALTS, Basel, La Rada, Locarno (2012), 1m3, Lausanne (2010), Centre Culturel Suisse (2008) and Rotwand Gallery (2013, 2011), as well as in group exhibitions at the Centre d'art contemporain Genève in the exhibition *Hotel Abisso* (2013), and at the Aargauer Kunsthhaus in the survey exhibition of young Swiss art *La Jeunesse est Un Art* (2012). He has already been awarded numerous prizes for his work, including the Kiefer Hablitzel Preis (2013), the Swiss Art Award (2010 and 2009), and the Prix Mobilère Young Art (2008). In addition to his artistic practice, Pilet also pursues curatorial and art criticism projects, including running the exhibition space *Forde* in Geneva (2010-12), or the journal *CRITICISM* (since 2009) together with Tiphany Blanc and Vincent Normand.

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