

The making of polyurethane objects has played a central role in the work of Peter Fischli and David Weiss for over 30 years. The objects themselves often depict utilitarian devices, tools or other everyday paraphernalia, all handcrafted and painted to be almost indistinguishable from the original. Boris Groys wrote that the practice of making the objects revives "the ethos of the artist as a working, creating craftsman who once again represents the things of reality." Yet the exhibition of the polyurethane objects as artworks, carefully presented as if they were just mundane things, introduces layers of paradox, irony and humour.

The exhibition at Sprüth Magers Berlin is conceived as a single installation, with the gallery transformed to resemble a nondescript suburban work- and storeroom. The space appears to be a purgatory of forlorn and forgotten things, a place for objects to collect dust before being reused or discarded. Palettes, an old phone, keys, cigarettes, a bottle, a shoe, a chain saw and a dusty keyboard, among many other objects, are all placed in the room as if abandoned, their usefulness exhausted. Each one of the objects was made at some time over the past 30 years and each one was kept back in the studio, surplus to previous exhibitions. The objects themselves are thus cast-offs, divorced from the utility they propose, while as a collection they form a kind of *Salon des Objets Refusés* of the artist's previous endeavors. Out of this perfectly calibrated mess emerges a portrait, as precise in its description of a period of time as it is a constant state of mind or being.

Referred to as 'absent' things by the artists, the objects and the installation as a whole play with our perceptions, perverting how we might usually convert visual information into well-grounded beliefs about the external world. The objects look perfectly useful but have no practical purpose or functionality beyond their existence as artworks. Their heightened verisimilitude makes the objects near-perfect facsimiles of the objects they depict, yet they are empty and insubstantial, a condition that serves only to underline the playfulness of the project and the incongruity of the medium. Pure surface, the polyurethane objects evoke utility yet exist only to be looked at by gallery visitors. "They're a bit like will-o-the-wisps," comments Peter Fischli – "there in visual terms but not corresponding in terms of touch. Phantoms."

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