

The high availability of technologies has left its mark on contemporary art. Moreover, the artistic field has undergone a massive process of professionalization. There is a certain inner logic to these developments, and they indisputably brought positive changes. And yet, one cannot help but observe them with a slight feeling of unease – a strange sense that an increasing amount of what we see simply fails to affect us. Time and again one encounters detachment, distancing gestures and attitudes, anonymous aesthetics and chilly moods. They may serve to mirror and comment on the realities of contemporary life, realities characterized by sophisticated overproduction, an excess of communication and incessant self-improvement. In critically reflecting on these tendencies, art too runs the risk of falling victim to alienation. This ambivalent situation raises the question of whether artistic production should fall in line with the zeitgeist of everyday life, and to what extent – or whether art should, by contrast, attempt to distance itself and establish a sense of withdrawal.

The exhibition *Raw and Delirious* formulates a longing for situations and experiences that interject into our indolent compliance with the ‘now’, that disrupt smooth poses and attitudes. It articulates a desire for gestures and objects which are vulnerable through their sheer separation, which scrutinize notions of aesthetic appropriateness and inappropriateness, which redefine the untimely – and which tread the boundaries between the acceptable and the unacceptable.

The works on display were mostly created using simple or even traditional techniques. They are ostensibly products of workmanship, sometimes to a fault. They are not polite, frictionless or discreet. They do not hide behind a veil of skill and aptitude. Rather, some of these works could be considered too loud, too subjective, too emotional, too enthusiastic, too naïve, too crude, too obscene, too jokey or just too arbitrary.

In any case, these exhibits cannot be reduced to a common denominator. They all share an urge for expression and a simple material form. They consistently display raw gestures, often involving the human body in some way. This can get messy, but there is also an overarching craving for purity. These works are distinguished by such ambivalences and dichotomies. The exhibition establishes a veritable kaleidoscope of different forms of disturbance and lack of distance, challenging the possibilities and impossibilities of recalcitrant dissociation.

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