

The artistic strategy of accumulating heterogeneous materials and found objects drawn from diverging contexts is not without tradition. It goes back to a time before Surrealism, and was perhaps most aptly described by Lautréamont in *"Songs of Maldoror"* (1874) as the beauty of a chance encounter between a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table.

Mathis Altmann's works can be seen in the light of this tradition, as they too are based on an accumulative process of incorporating disparate elements. Yet Altmann's miniaturesque spaces and microcosms grafted into and upon deserts of concrete, are not examples of excessive or eccentric unrelated combinations. Rather, these works seem to originate from a controlled chaos, as if made from a single piece. Not adhering to the logic of scale, Altmann's sculptures materialize a mirage of model-like proportions, a kind of coherent proportionality that alludes to the function of narration. Their distance to the factual is unveiled in ironic, humorous, and coquettish moments.

Through embedded fragments, this narration appears to anchor its point of reference in contemporary realities: "Finally, I get the investment advice I expect". And while the resulting claustrophobic mixture of these superimpositions and entwinements surely has to do with today's reality, Altmann's works do not merely expend observant diagnoses of our times. Much too pointed, hypertensive, and artificial to actually simulate reality, Altmann's works can be described more succinctly as inventions than depictions of the world; as fictions inspired by the morbid and terrorizing aspects of contemporary reality. Yet by conjuring these senses -the morbid, chaotic, nervous, and vulgar- with empathy and attention to detail, Altmann's work is never cynical. Subsumed in fascination, his scenarios lack a sense of despair in the face of monolithic power, the terror of the spectacle, and consumption that level all material specifics.

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