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Michael Hakimi
Nuts should chew themselves!

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A button doesn't need pants and a wad of smoke doesn't need fire. Signs float, left to themselves, casually through the world, meaning here: through supermarkets and over packages, through the Internet and over shopping bags. Michael Hakimi's exhibition *Nuts should chew themselves!* is at the beginning full of de-contextualized signifiers, full of strange objects that are neither image nor sculpture, neither flat nor voluminous. They are simply somehow there and inhabit the exhibition space. They just stand around as flat displays, a bit bored; they just hang out on the wall as wallpaper, very concise. Mute witnesses of a rather very normal but equally monstrous sign production. They seem to have as little use for themselves as we for them.

Good, they are somehow a bit cheeky, these signs, a bit stubborn. The grinning comic-clouds on *Druffis* (all works 2013) for example – the wallpaper work in the first room – appear as if they had been incredibly hungry and therefore nibbled on the nuts in *Mandeln* (almonds), a MDF display in front of them. The round "bite marks" with which this display is finished at least allow for this association. Images, sculptures and things find each other delicious – after all, both subjects come from the world of shopping, one from a shopping bag, the other from a nut package, so from there where the product (and even more its advertisement) should look so good and "fresh" and super that a corresponding desire is aroused. And these desires become so escalated here that the images can't help taking a bite out of each other. They jump across each other and if at first only on the level of a rudimentary, formal relationship. Round here, round there, something like that. They relate to each other and then again not, they establish associative stories on the level of provenance and then let them go again. But one thing seems always to be true: they are somehow self-sufficient "among themselves". They don't need us, "they chew themselves".

Slightly modified, this self-reference up to cannibalism also seems to apply to the film *Eingemauert* (walled in) that is on view in the back room of the gallery. Traces of light from a movie that is being played can be seen on an almost closed MacBook Pro – more precisely: from the horror film *Walled In* (2009). Beyond the fact that the concrete product eludes again here just like the actual nuts behind the image on their package and is only present in abstract traces the whole thing seems as if the laptop, left to its own devices, caresses itself and presents its premium aluminum surface in a kind of spotlight as in a product video. Also here the title assists in giving meaning from the meta level – without allowing to somehow incorporate and thereby resolve the disturbingly evil, bizarrely cold and permanently rudimentary status of this video.

How much the displays typical of Hakimi remain in such a precisely indefinite area between sculpture and image becomes especially clear with *Knopf* and *Rauch* (smoke), two works that can be found in the main room, once you squeeze through the thin corridor between the gallery counter and the work *1234R*, the circuit diagram of a gear box on a white bed sheet, in the thin passageway between the gallery counter: a huge jeans button mounted on MDF leaning against the wall as well as an elegant and angularly cut out image of smoke, laminated onto a sheet of aluminum and presented on a fragile chrome frame in the middle of the room. Both are – as already the nuts and clouds – greatly magnified seemingly banal and familiar everyday details that are inflated many times over. Despite their initial “pictorial nature” they also function spatially like a “classic” sculpture. One must explore and the closer one comes to them, the more the exhibition space functions as a magnifying glass. Zooming in with each step until the images turn into pixels and pixels become laser printer dots. In the end, all possible attempts at achieving “closure” end up in smoke. The fly is wide open. Someone zip it up! Oh, that doesn’t work, leave it open, after all I’m in there myself...

Dominikus Müller
Translated by Emily Luski