

David Kordansky Gallery is very pleased to announce *A comb a hole*, an exhibition of new work by Valentin Carron.

Valentin Carron's sculptures, installations, and paintings inhabit the world as recreated ready-mades. Drawing from iconography associated with his own native Switzerland, he meticulously recreates characteristic local forms, often substituting one material for another, and generating unexpected compositional complexity from otherwise mute or overlooked objects. In so doing, he infuses the ordinary and the mundane with humor, melancholy, and poetry. *A comb a hole* features a new body of pedestalbased bronze sculptures and a stealthily dramatic installation that alters the gallery's space.

Working from photographs taken of seemingly random sections of pavement, asphalt, flooring, and sewer grates in his hometown of Fully in southwest Switzerland, Carron has created flat, slab-like objects designed to be viewed from above. Beginning with clay, he forms each of the elements by hand before casting the composition in bronze and then painting it. The sculptures capture, by way of relief, the patterns in surfaces that often go unnoticed because they are underfoot. Many also feature sculptural representations of the kinds of things that end up on the ground in a municipal environment; these include stylized renditions of banana peels, fallen French fries, and hardware that might have dropped into the wet concrete before it set.

Installed on pedestals arranged in the gallery according to a slightly irregular grid, in their totality the sculptures exist as an austere field of monuments to the quotidian. These are depictions of daily life at its most drab and banal, and yet they bristle with surreal juxtapositions and a stoic comedy, suggesting that even the ground we stand upon can be raised up for contemplation and reflection. Since the viewer is still required to look down to see them, however, they also skewer the very notion of tabletop sculpture, performing as both the flat tabletop and the object that rests upon it. At the same time, this flatness also allows them to be read as if they were horizontal paintings, or hybrid works occupying an intermediate spatial dimension between the second and the third. Subtle textures and color shifts play out from one sculpture to the next, drawing the eye toward minor distinctions that take on exponentially increasing significance as the viewer navigates the installation.

An emphasis on surface detail can be identified as a common theme throughout Carron's practice. Regardless of the materials he uses in any given body of work, he revels in their plainness and the aesthetic interest they offer in a relatively unadorned state. While his matter-of-fact attitude is indebted in part to minimalist art historical examples, it also speaks to a certain punk-like aesthetic

and his interest in homage as a form of both affection and critique. In *A comb a hole* this is also exemplified in the way the sculptures have been painted. Carron uses industrial paints (colors are selected from a pre-existing chart), and applies them, in what is at once an off-handed gesture and a careful assessment of the innate properties of both the bronze and the paint, using an uninflected series of broad strokes, sometimes allowing the finish of the bronze to show through. In several instances, variously shaped holes in the bronzes reveal identically shaped openings in the tops of their pedestals; together the apertures function like momentary eruptions of the abyss, breaking any conceptual fourth wall that might exist between the ideal space of the art object and the tangible space of the exhibition itself.

These ruptures find an eerie parallel in two eye-shaped holes that seem to observe the sculptures, as well as their viewers, from high up in one of the gallery's walls. The "eyes" are the result of an elaborate and carefully constructed intervention. An entirely new wall has been built in front of the existing one, and the holes themselves are lined with concrete forms that subtly differentiate their perimeter from the plaster that surrounds them; even the surface of the wall behind the holes has been painted black, as if to further accentuate the overriding power of negative space. Inspired by similar openings found in the walls of European village architecture, the installation both invites and thwarts the desire to look beyond what is right in front of us. As in much of Carron's work, this dynamic has broader cultural implications--in a world of widespread globalization, local things are exposed to a universal gaze, but they also get harder to see.

In 2013, Valentin Carron (b. 1977, Martigny, Switzerland) represented Switzerland at the 55th Venice Biennale. He has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at numerous institutions worldwide, including Overbeck Gesellschaft, Lübeck, Germany (2015); Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (2014); Fondation Louis Moret, Martigny, Switzerland (2014); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2010); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo La Conserva, Ceuti, Spain (2009); Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland (2007); Swiss Institute, New York (2006); and, with Mai-Thu Perret, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2006). Recent group exhibitions include *Wanderlust*, High Line, New York (2016); *Elevation 1049: Between Heaven and Hell*, LUMA Foundation, Gstaad, Switzerland (2014); *Alone Together*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2013); *Lost (in LA)*, presented by FLAX, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Barnsdall Art Park, Los Angeles (2012); *Le jeunesse est un art*, Jubiläum Manor Kunstpreis, Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau, Switzerland (2012); *The World as Will and Wallpaper*, Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2012); and *The New Public*, MUSEION of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano, Italy (2012). Carron lives and works in Martigny, Switzerland.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*