

Pressrelease

Robert Brambora at Bonner Kunstverein

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First part:

Using traditional techniques and materials, Robert Brambora contemplates our current relationship between life and work. As you enter the hall, hands clenched into fists, well-known since the nineteenth century as a symbol of protest from the workers' or civil rights movements reach out toward the viewer. The iridescent body fragments protrude from shirt and suit sleeves in various colors. The series is supplemented by anonymous silhouette-like images of heads that make the gaze wander over surreal landscapes.

Two of the heads refer to the literary figure in Herman Melville's short story *Bartleby, the Scrivener* (1853). Shaped into a loop and engraved, Brambora quotes the hardworking lawyer's clerk, who one day surprisingly tells his superior: "I would prefer not to."

Second part:

Brambora reflects on the form that this act of refusal can take today in his expansive installation dedicated to the Japanese phenomenon of Hikikomori. The sparse interior refers to the private living space of an existence withdrawn from society. Only the collection of modeled ceramic heads and the hand-sewn caps indicate the one remaining activity in this place. The large-format text collages, meanwhile, paint a picture of the fictional character's inner life, as Brambora combines fragments of theoretical texts on property speculation, future concepts for urban life, and the economic crisis with personal comments from online forums, thus intertwining individual destinies and economic circumstances to form a complex image space. In the light of such an absurd world, the initial symbol of resistance, the fist, threatens to switch from exclamation to question mark.

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