

# Super Super Markt

*The Ordinary of the Ordinary*

Clémentine Adou, Milena Büsch, Michel Majerus

Curated by Oriane Durand

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Super Super Markt, Brunnenstr. 22, Berlin

The use of consumer objects in art is a practice that dates back more than a century. Initiated by Marcel Duchamp with his ready-mades, this approach gained momentum in the 1960s, notably with Andy Warhol and his silkscreen prints of Campbell's soup cans, emblems of a reflection on consumption and reproducibility. Shortly afterwards, John Baldessari appropriated film images through collages and montages, questioning the relationship between image and language and transforming visual communication into artistic material. The common thread between these approaches is that they start from the ordinary in order to question its construction.

The exhibition *The Ordinary of the Ordinary* follows in this post-Warholian tradition, reflecting on mass consumption and production. It brings together works by Clémentine Adou (b. 1988 in Paris, lives in Paris), Milena Büsch (b. 1980 in Weingarten, lives in Berlin) and Michel Majerus (b. 1967 in Esch-sur-Alzette, d. 2002 in Niederanven), three artists who use simple, 'ordinary' gestures to question 'ordinary' forms. These gestures correspond to those of covering or reproduction. Whether mechanical, as in Majerus' screen prints, or manual, as in Adou and Büsch's paintings, these gestures create a critical distance. Through repetition or copying, in the manner of Thomas Bernhard in literature, they end up blurring the meaning between disappearance and appearance, between saturation and erasure, pushing the object to the point of collapse of meaning.

Hung on the walls, Clémentine Adou's painted cardboard pieces appear as minimalist, geometric shapes. Made from packaging boxes collected from the street and chosen for what they contained (televisions, computers), they bear the physical traces of a world saturated with images and digital flows. Covered with layers of black or white tinted varnish, these monochrome surfaces tend towards abstraction. Yet behind this apparent perfection, which could evoke the refined, linear art of Anne Truitt, these wall sculptures convey an almost contradictory sensation of softness. Beneath the layers of colour, words (Ultra HD, OLED, Crystal, CLASS, etc.), numbers and creases in the cardboard can be discerned, traces of their previous life that reveal the fragility of the material. This contrast between formal rigour and the precariousness of the medium highlights a tension inherent in contemporary material culture, that of capitalist production which seeks visual perfection while relying on fragile and disposable structures. *Z, Q, W, V, E, C, H, N, X*, (2024-25), cigarette cartons painted in a neutral green, extend this relationship between concealment and manipulation. Only photographs of blind eyes – blinded by excessive smoking – remain visible, emphasising the paradox of pleasure, caught between desire and blindness. Assembled to form letters, the cartridges compose a new alphabet. The object, though carrying toxic content, thus becomes an ambivalent sign, where language plays with matter.

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Playfulness is also a central strategy for Milena Büsch, whose painting is based on gestures of reproduction and covering. Inspired by colouring exercises, Büsch paints over patterns printed on paper or cardboard, meticulously following the original outlines and colours. This process, both systematic and detached, contrasts the spontaneity of the pictorial gesture with the mechanics of copying. The images she selects, taken from newspaper pages, cookbooks, decorative napkins and even advertising billboards, highlight how ordinary representations shape taste, meaning and perception. In *Dead Duck – Zange* (2024) and *Dead Duck – Schwein* (2024), presented at Super Super Markt, the artist takes this game to the point of absurdity by combining, as in a rebus, two elements that, at first glance, have nothing to do with each other. The viewer is then drawn into an active interpretation, seeking to connect these discordant signs and solve a puzzle that eludes them as mental associations unfold. Beneath the simplicity of the gesture and the triviality of the motifs lies a reflection on the language of images, on their ability to signify, to deceive, to shape our gaze. The artist thus highlights, not without irony, the way in which aesthetic and commercial codes shape our contemporary visual culture.

While the motifs in Michel Majerus' two silkscreen prints, *Ohne Titel*, n.d. (2001) and *Ohne Titel*, n.d. (2001), seem suspended in an undefined space similar to the tools floating in the colour of Büsch's paintings, the reproduction technique associated with the slightly faded black and white tones amplify an impression of planned obsolescence. These images, drawn from a technological imagination that is already outdated, particularly with regard to the robot, seem haunted by the promise of a future that is now gone. The fragmentary, low-angle view of the Wheel World shop front or the image of the robot superimposed on the word 'Simplicity' encapsulate the moment between fascination with progress, something joyful and dynamic, and the awareness of its exhaustion. Majerus' artistic practice, nourished by pop culture, design and video games, records the promises of modernity while revealing its temporal and ideological limitations. Here, the artist captures the moment when the advertising image, torn from its context, becomes a relic, a vestige of a collective belief in novelty and efficiency.

*The Ordinary of the Ordinary* explores how simple gestures – covering, reproducing, repeating – can transform the ordinary into a critical field. For Adou, Büsch and Majerus, repetition, covering and copying are not mere imitations, but rather a methodical observation of visual culture and its mechanisms. By replaying everyday forms, their works lay bare the paradoxes of a visual culture driven by consumerism, where beauty, merchandise and disappearance collide.

Oriane Durand