

Julien Monnerie

Talking Alone

Feb 9 - March 9, 2019

Consider the cufflink. At first a functional accessory, it has been relegated to a symbol of a certain social status (most commonly the financial elite) by the advent of mass-produced buttons, directly sewn onto shirts.

Consider the wearing of ornate hats. Only a few decades ago, outfits wouldn't have been considered complete without a hat.

Consider the metal cake mold, increasingly rare in our modern kitchens.

Consider keys. Bulky, heavy, physical.

The steady dissolving of social codes deemed outmoded, thus burdensome, has been necessary for the ever-growing streamlining of everyday life, imposed by the economic liberalist creed in the name of productivity, efficiency, speed, and youth. This historical tendency, accelerating since the triumph of the free market as the only truly imagineable scenario, has annihilated the existential purpose of an array of objects, which now survive within narrow fields, namely within the luxury industry.

In such a world for which the perfectly ideal shape would be an egg, or a sphere (smooth, seamless, neutral), social interaction itself could increasingly be seen as an annoyance, to be avoided in favor of the individualistic comfort.

The works Julien Monnerie has produced for his debut US solo exhibition were all fabricated in collaboration with craftspeople. Various skills are utilized like any readily available material. These skills and the people who perpetuate them were encountered during Monnerie's daily life in Paris, a city he uses as a vast studio, with little distinction between wandering the streets and producing artworks.

The *Forme* works were made with Lorenzo Re, a master milliner working with haute couture houses such as Dior, and derive from wooden hat blocks traditionally used to shape felt or straw headgears. Two of them are dyed with shoe polish by Atelier Pavin, a second-generation cobbler specializing in custom coloring of leather goods, a stone's throw away from the Japanese knife store where Monnerie teaches knife sharpening. The head and feet are brought together by the unexpected encounter of these two artisans; although abstracted, the resulting objects could now be used to shape real hats.

Similarly, the *Aspic* sculptures came into existence through PACT(e), a residency program for artists to work with specific companies, run by city-funded Carreau du Temple: Monnerie worked with craftspeople from metal company Tartaix (founded in 1919). Inspired by cake and jelly molds, these

sculptures can be considered tools to shape other things from them, just like the *Forme* works.

The two black wall works feature old keys Monnerie has been collecting and chemically blackening, inset in a specific fabric made to upholster chairs and sofas designed by Pierre Paulin, who was famed for his innovative and quite futuristic furniture design in the 1960's. That optimistic feeling of collective utopianism, along with our ability as a society to envision a brighter future, seem to have all but vanished since then.

Punctuating the walls are small untitled silkscreened brass works, reprising cufflink designs. Monnerie has been repeatedly using cufflinks in his works, either real ones fixed onto canvases, or using the surface designs as found abstract designs appearing on large-format paintings, and he has amassed quite a collection over the years. Recalling geometric abstraction, these delicate enlargements don't hide the worn down guillochage of the source objects, showing both the passage of time and how avant-garde art's sensibilities have optimistically trickled down into individual accessories.

It's no surprise that given the generalized feeling of alienation and powerlessness in today's wild capitalism, more and more people search for the tangible, the local, the handmade, the organic. It's easy to be cynical about it. The luxury industry safeguarding certain skills almost always means the removal of said skills from accessible everyday life, placing them into an onerous sphere dictated by strategies of desire and distinction. Although conscious and curious of this historical progression, Monnerie's work doesn't tend toward the exclusive, instead showcasing a matter-of-fact existence of ways to consider the available options in our everyday lives, testifying to the possibility of a functioning and fluid society comprised of specificities and various languages responding to each other. There is a fundamental irrationality in the act of making art; Monnerie's work expands what is available, reconsiders how joyful and full of variety existence can be.

Julien Monnerie (b. 1987) lives and works in Paris. He studied at the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris, the École des Beaux-Arts de Rennes and the Glasgow School of Art. Recent exhibitions include Le Plateau (FRAC), Paris; Shanaynay, Paris; Palette Terre, Paris; Room East, New York; Van Gelder, Amsterdam; Apes and Castles, Brussels. He will participate in an exhibition at Carreau du Temple in Paris this Spring. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States.



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JM011

Julien Monnerie

JR, 2019

keys, fabric, MDF

27 1/2 x 23 5/8 in (70 x 60 cm)



JM012

Julien Monnerie

100 6 A6, 2019

keys, fabric, MDF

27 1/2 x 23 5/8 in (70 x 60 cm)



JM013

Julien Monnerie

Aspic 2, 2019

brass and tin

3 3/8 x 11 x 11 in (8.7 x 28 x 28 cm)



JM013

Julien Monnerie

Aspic 2, 2019

brass and tin

3 3/8 x 11 x 11 in (8.7 x 28 x 28 cm)



JM014

Julien Monnerie

Aspic I, 2018

brass, copper and tin

5 1/4 x 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 in (13.8 x 19.2 x 19.2 cm)



JM014

Julien Monnerie

Aspic I, 2018

brass, copper and tin

5 1/4 x 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 in (13.8 x 19.2 x 19.2 cm)



JM015

Julien Monnerie

Forme (white), 2016

wood (linden), acrylic

7 x 8 1/2 x 9 1/2 in (18 x 22 x 23.5 cm)



JM015

Julien Monnerie

Forme (white), 2016

wood (linden), acrylic

7 x 8 1/2 x 9 1/2 in (18 x 22 x 23.5 cm)



JM015

Julien Monnerie

Forme (purple), 2016-2018

wood (linden), shoe dye

7 x 7 1/2 x 8 1/2 in (17.8 x 19 x 21.7 cm)



JM015

Julien Monnerie

Forme (purple), 2016-2018

wood (linden), shoe dye

7 x 7 1/2 x 8 1/2 in (17.8 x 19 x 21.7 cm)



JM016

Julien Monnerie

Forme (blonde), 2016

wood (linden), varnish

7 x 7 1/2 x 9 in (15 x 20 x 22.5 cm)



JM016

Julien Monnerie

Forme (blonde), 2016

wood (linden), varnish

7 x 7 1/2 x 9 in (15 x 20 x 22.5 cm)



JM017

Julien Monnerie

Forme (green), 2016-2018

wood (linden), shoe dye

5 x 6 1/4 x 7 3/4 (13 x 16 x 19.8 cm)



JM017

Julien Monnerie

Forme (green), 2016-2018

wood (linden), shoe dye

5 x 6 1/4 x 7 3/4 (13 x 16 x 19.8 cm)



JM022

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

2 5/8 x 6 3/4 in (6.8 x 17.4 cm)



JM018

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

4 3/8 x 4 3/8 in (11 x 11 cm)



JM021

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

4 x 4 in (10.3 x 10.3 cm)



JM020

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

4 x 4 1/4 in (10.3 x 10.9 cm)



JM019

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

3 1/4 x 5 3/8 in (8.5 x 13.8 cm)



JM023

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

4 x 5 1/2 in (10.5 x 14 cm)



JM024

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

4 3/8 x 4 3/8 in (11.4 x 11.4 cm)



JM025

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

3 1/8 x 3 5/8 in (8 x 9.3 cm)



JM026

Julien Monnerie

Untitled, 2019

silkscreen on brass

4 1/4 x 4 1/8 in (10.8 x 10.6 cm)