

Johannes Wald forming a self

31.05.2019 - 13.07.2019

a collaboration with Daniel Marzona Gallery, Berlin

As an artist, one creates not only a work, but at the same time also one's own persona as an artist. Some of the works in Johannes Wald's exhibition in the Baril Gallery deal with the unavoidable combination of these two aspects, while others are concerned with fundamental issues of sculpture - with the inside and outside, material, form, space, and emotion as possible content. While some works point to the future, others come from the past or unite their before and after in the here and now.

In front of the entrance to the gallery room hangs, inconspicuously, a framed sheet of paper from the year 2012 embossed with the inscription "Johannes Wald - Bildhauer" (sculptor); it sets the tone for the exhibition's entire staging. In front of the short partition wall in the room, we first encounter an 85-kg (the same weight as the artist's body) pile of bronze ingots titled "Ioan Pădure - sculptor neterminat" (Johannes Wald - unfinished sculptor). Behind the partition wall is another loose pile - of aluminum bars (also 85 kg, but with many more bars) titled "John Forest - sculptor laying dormant". In the future, the ingots can be melted down by the artist or someone else, or, still as bars, they can be put in different arrangements any number of times - two abstractions of a self-portrait in progress.

The work "Untitled (model for a self)" is a kind of short circuit of the sculpting process. Wald's hands and the material that these hands are just forming are cast in plaster, inseparable; the boundary between object and subject literally dissolves here. Also seemingly in a process of dissolution is the sculpture titled "Torso". A silicon form directly molded from a human model lies, cut open and as if shed, on the floor. The viewer sees both interior and exterior surfaces of the form. The interior surfaces bear the negative impression of the skin, while the external traces testify to the application of the material. Actual body contours are only fragmentarily recognizable. The work can be read as a casting mold for a possible figure, but it is intended as a completed work that, forever formless, can be laid out differently in every installation and is abandoned to gradual decay.

The work "Range of my sentiments" describes a kind of emotional space - a strange coordinate system, such as is used in mathematics to depict spatial complexes. Formed from plaster directly as a positive, it displays fingerprints and other traces of manual processing. It connects subjective activity with the cool, abstract, and generally readable signs for space. The supposed theme of the sculpture is the three-dimensionality inscribed per se in a sculpture. Even if associations of this tautological zeroing of the object as the level of its meaning are always evoked, the inconspicuous work goes far beyond that. Set up in the corner of the exhibition room, the sculpture namely seems to take up all the other works in itself, thereby becoming a kind of frame comprising and locating all of Wald's artistic expressions.

An inconspicuous broken mirror comprises, in one placement, once again the two poles around which the whole exhibition seems to orbit. Materially, the work consists of a pane of glass removed from the artist's studio window and the silver of an ancient coin. In a traditional chemical process of manufacturing mirrors, silver dissolved from a coin with acid was applied to the piece of glass. The title "Stade du miroir" refers to an essay by Lacan describing the moment when a child recognizes itself in a mirror for the first time and equating this moment with the birth of the child's personality. A self-produced mirror seems like an apt metaphor for the search for one's self-understanding as an artist. In the result of his hands' work, the artist recognizes himself in the unstable, silver mirror image, whose existence is owed to the transformation of an ancient coin that was itself the bearer of a relief portrait for almost 2,000 years.

Daniel Marzona, Berlin
May 2019

:BARIL

List of works:

1.

untitled

2011

embossed paper

47 x 35 cm

2.

untitled (model for a self)

2019

plaster

40 x 40 x 16 cm

3.

Ioan Pădure - sculptor neterminat

2019

bronze (85 kg)

Variable dimensions

4.

John Forest - sculptor lying dormant

2019

aluminium (85kg)

variable dimension

5.

space spanned by sentiments

2019

wax

2 pieces, each 25 x 19 x 4 cm

6.

hands lending thought body

2016

bronze

variable dimensions

7.

torso

2019

silicone

variable dimensions

8.

stade du miroir

2019

glass, taken from a studio window, silver from an ancient coin

(Hadrian, (A.D. 117-138), silver denarius, stuck AD 137, Rome

Obv: HADRIANVS AVG COS III P P - bare head right of Hadrian

Rev: SALVS AVG - Salus standing to right feeding a snake arising from altar

References: RIC 267, Diameter: ~17x19 mm, Weight: 3,17 g)

31 x 38 x 0,4 cm

9.

range of my sentiments

2019

plaster, jute, steel

68 x 68 x 68 cm

