

Birds, Plants and a Chair

Björn Braun,
Diango Hernández,
Laura Lamiel,
Jürgen Drescher,
Vajiko Chachkhiani

13.3.–9.5.2015

With Björn Braun, Diango Hernández, Laura Lamiel, Jürgen Drescher, and Vajiko Chachkhiani, the show Birds, Plants and a Chair features five artists of different generations, whose works become poetic manifestations of existential narrations in space during the course of sculptural processes by both formally and mentally reinterpreting their source materials and the situations they depart from.

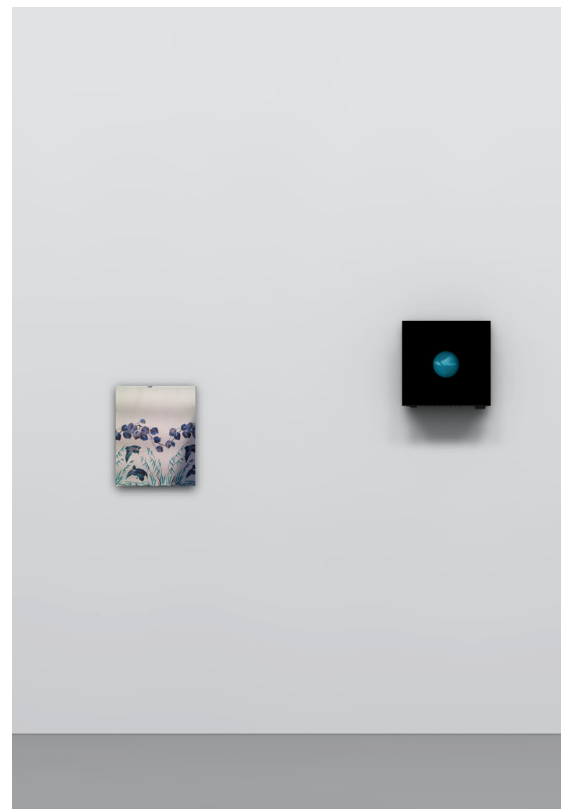
Diango Hernández's work is characterized by a dissonance between collective and subjective accounts of history. In an interplay of found and newly produced components, his installation arrangements break open linear narratives of reality and initiate a cluster of possible events. For Hernández, the view of reality consists in the interplay of past, present and future that culminates in his works. The point of departure of his complex intellectual games is his childhood and youth in Cuba, shaped by politically defined views of reality that were dissolved by autobiographic experiences – not least by his private decision to travel abroad in the 1990s to encounter other contexts, which are reflected in his works.

The two-part wall installation Opaque Waters consists of a tablecloth from the 1940s found in Dresden spanned on a frame to a “picture”. The picturesque motif of flying ducks in a landscape obscures the historical origin of the found object. At the same time, a Plexiglas pane mounted between the stretcher frame and the wall disturbs the contemplative viewing of the “picture”. One's gaze wanders to the right-hand fragment of Opaque Waters, a hi-fi amplifier that becomes the mute picture carrier of a digitally produced map depicting all Atlantic storms as fine drawings over the globe. While one could describe the drawings of the storms paths as

“beautiful”, when taking a geographical look, one detects Cuba hidden behind a particularly dense accumulation of lines. In the interplay of both objects stripped of their function, Opaque Waters creates an irritating moment in which one's subjective imagination continues to tell the story.

Björn Braun's collages, objects and installations consist of transformation processes. The observation of existing situations, objects and materials from nature and everyday life is followed by Björn Braun's precise interventions. In formal terms, his works combine aspects of Arte Povera, Performance- and Minimal Art. In the synthesis of removing and adding, however, the logical sequence of the beginning and end of a “real” (art) object is reversed and the respective material becomes a medium of new narrations.

The two new collages Untitled are made from the illustrated parts of found second-hand books. In an elaborate work process, Björn Braun cuts fragment upon fragment out of the existing illustrations that then become the elements, one-to-one, of new constructions in the respective picture. In one work, a timber-framed cabin emerges in an alleged “snow landscape”, or architectural components of a nuclear power plant become an idyllic mountain landscape.



Diango Hernández, Opaque Waters, 2015
oil on linen and plexiglass, sound amp and self-adhesive pigment print on paper
painting: 50 × 40 cm, sound amp: 35 × 40 × 15 cm

The two-part object Untitled is made of two deconstructed chairs. The seats and backs of a black and a white plastic chair were dismantled and then reassembled to a new “seat”, while the other parts were merged to an object-like “abstract painting”. The two chairs are relieved of their actual function of providing a seat and in their reconstructed form become a “picture to look at” that in an ironic and subtle way starts to tell stories about the cultures of everyday life and idleness.



Björn Braun, Untitled, 2014
collage on book cover
33 × 23,5 cm

Jürgen Drescher’s work is characterized by objects of daily use. His first well-known works such as DRESCHER Bar (1981), Zu groß für über’s Sofa (1984) or Foyer (1985) were sculptural and installative arrangements of found and worn materials in the sense of ready-mades. In the work process of ironic-subtle observation, these initial pieces already form a sort of limbo between reality and its model as a frame for possible actions. Jürgen Drescher’s recent works such as Kiste (2008–2014), Cushion (centred), 2011, or Yorgan II, 2012, focus on mundane objects. However, they are no longer originals as part of an arrangement, but become reproductions of themselves through the elaborate process of aluminum casting. The works thus elude the notion of the ready-made and also of their original design and functionality.



Jürgen Drescher Cushion (centered), 2011
aluminium sand casting
35 × 40,5 × 5,5 cm

As casts of reality, Drescher’s objects reveal all the time-based marks of usage and wear of their “models”. They form an abstract metaphor of everyday narrations. Drescher compares his objects with a fund, both in the sense of the German word “Fund” meaning “find” and the English word “fund” for capital, enabling an exploration of the features of his own social reality as an artist and that of his surroundings. By transforming his finds to casts, Drescher simultaneously formulates a kind of “homage”, saving the respective object with its signs of usage from being forgotten in the sphere of banality and positioning it on new narrative levels.



Jürgen Drescher Kiste / Box, 2008–2014
welded aluminium sand casting, aluminium coating
56 × 62 × 66 cm

Laura Lamiel's sculptural and photographic scenographies superimpose different spatial and narrative structures. Originally trained to become a painter, she has been transferring pictorial arrangements to space since the late 1980s. Here, she confronts minimalistic elements such as white enameled metal panels or neon tubes with found everyday objects and objects from her studio. Lamiel describes the superimposition of different spatial and object constellations, like transferring experimental studio situations to the gallery space or the confrontation between strictly rational forms and intuitive elements, as "formal shock". This repeatedly leads to repositioning one's own gaze and questioning the status of the work that one sees or in which one is literally situated with Lamiel.



Laura Lamiel Untitled, 2000
baryta print with added plastic
126 × 157 × 4 cm



Laura Lamiel L'espace du dedans (1), 2014
leather briefcase, enameled silkscreened steel, mirror,
paper, neon light
28 × 26 × 25 cm

Her early photograph Untitled documents a real working situation in her studio that can simultaneously be the fictive "image" of an artist's studio as a model-like arrangement in front of the camera, and through the application of a foil on the picture medium also becomes an object. The two objects L'espace du dedans (Innerer Raum) 1 and 2 combine Lamiel's signature elements, neon tubes, minimal surfaces and photographs, in the narrowly defined space of two found suitcases. As a kind of "scene within a scene", they reveal the beginning of numerous narrations of everyday life, the artist and ourselves.

Vajiko Chachkhiani's works start with basic questions related to human existence. His process-oriented objects and installations retrace the structures of fundamental conflicts, without, however, making moral judgments. Negative aspects are always connected to the positive. For Chachkhiani, the themes of death, violence and social conflicts are always associated with life, intimacy and poetry. His works are based on performative actions, with traces of human actions and interactions remaining visible. This results in poetic sculptural manifestations of human individuality, on the one hand, and collective history and memory, as well as the extent to which they are impacted by political and social influences, on the other.

His homeland Georgia often plays a role, like in the group of works titled The missing Landscape, which restages pines burnt during the Caucasus war and sculpturally reconstructs missing elements with melted cartridges of Georgian hunters. He is repeatedly concerned with translating human actions, lifetimes and their consequences, as is the case with the object Two Portraits of the Same Person (who is not the same anymore), consisting of two mirror surfaces facing each other. In 2013, Chachkhiani took the body height and width of the Georgian boy Iviko, who lives in an orphanage. He translated the bodily constitution of the boy at the time into the minimal form of his object that also refers very poetically to the intangible course of an individual lifetime and mental development.

The film Chapter with no End also takes up this theme. In a static shot, the unedited film shows a man going to sleep on an existing grave. The scene starts during the day and ends at night. The concept of representing the real course of time

alludes to Andy Warhol's film *Sleep* from 1963. Whereas Warhol "stages" the voyeuristic gaze of the spectator, Chachkhiani develops a personal and allegorical poem dedicated to the cycle of life and death.



Vajiko Chachkhiani, Two Portraits of the Same Person (who is not the same anymore), 2014
two mirrors
153 × 35 × 1,5 cm

Jürgen Drescher (DE 1955) recently had a solo show at Kunstverein Karlsruhe in 2013. He held professorships at i.a. art academies in Hamburg, Munich and Stuttgart. His works were shown at group exhibitions at K20 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle Nuremberg, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Kunsthalle Kiel, Shanghai Biennial or ZKM Karlsruhe.

Laura Lamiel's (FR 1948) latest solo exhibitions took place at Kunstverein Langenhagen, La Galerie Art Centre, Noisy-le-Sec, Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Etienne. She also participated in international group exhibitions, like at Kunsthall Antwerpen, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Musée d'Art Moderne / Centre Pompidou or the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sao Paulo.

Vajiko Chachkhiani (GE 1985) studied at Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and UDK Berlin after his studies in mathematics at Tbilisi, Georgia. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Siegen dedicated a solo show to him in 2014. His works were exhibited at Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg or Stedelijk Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch.

Biographical Notes:

Diango Hernández (CUB 1970) has shown his works in numerous solo exhibitions, like most recently, at Landesgalerie Linz (2014), Kunstverein Nuremberg (2014), MART Rovereto (2012) and group shows at MoMA, New York, Hayward Gallery London, Venice Biennial 2005, Sao Paulo Biennial 2006 or Liverpool Biennial 2010.

Björn Braun (DE 1969) was awarded with the renowned Ars Viva prize in 2013. His works were on display at solo exhibitions such as at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2012) or Kunstverein Braunschweig (2009) as well as in group exhibitions at Museum Ostwall, Dortmund, MMK Frankfurt, Neues Museum Weimar, Museum Morsbroich in Leverkusen or GAM in Turin.

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