

Pawel Ferus „Plasma Reset“

A spray can foaming neon-colored plastic, black flies like black spots on the ceiling, Block Head, a block from which a bust of a man wearing a tie was roughly chiseled: They are what they are. Three small cans of an energy drink hold up a boulder the size of the room; the title of the work Suplex refers to a popular wrestling move.⁽¹⁾

Literalness seeks to tease out the actual meaning of the word, and his work usually confronts the self-evidence of images, words, and meanings. Pawel Ferus' literalness leads to unforeseeable, absurd, indeed nihilistic solutions: if you've forgotten what pop is, this is it.

Some of his early works explicitly make the grand reference, transforming striking works by Beuys or Holder to a new time. While his wickedly naïve humor might rub some art connoisseurs the wrong way, their high quality craftsmanship and ideational independence allow his works to successfully resist being branded as parody. From the very start, his art adaptations were effective reformulations of art and its self-conception. While the term adaptation is often used in art history, it also refers to the basic biological phenomenon that living beings unavoidably develop under the influence of changed surroundings. Thinking along these lines, it could even be said that Pawel Ferus works with the biology of art.

In so doing, the parameters of sculpture and the eloquence of images find themselves in absurd and unforeseen relations of tension. Pawel Ferus plays with images, they are provoked and degraded: while it is clear that there is now a glut of images, they are also socially effective weapons. His art exponentiates all-too-familiar images into a “more,” a “too,” a “behind,” and a “by no means!,” but always leads the beholder back to the genuine and spatial object.

His current exhibition at Galerie Wuethrich has the air of a poisonous-dangerous art laboratory, or rather a production site where an experimental approach to new materials is being studied. The processed material manifests itself in visually powerful sculpture. Their spatial placement or the presence or lack of a pedestal in all its forms allows these various sculptures to come to their full eloquence.

Plasma Reset reformats the traditional form of presentation on a pedestal, the refined technique of modeling and/or casting, and the art historical genre of the bust or the objet trouvé. Whether it is subverted or overtaken is too reminiscent of the distinction between high and low culture, an attitude to which Pawel responds with a wink, directing attention to the current virulence of visual culture. We see our own picture distorted through gunshot holes, a fascinatingly beautiful image that is constantly moving in our eyes, After Gods.

The work Ghost is the silicone cast of a double negative of a small plastic bust, whose original form has become absorbed in the process of creation to a point beyond recognition. A pedestal, stretched horizontally, supports the new abstract sculpture, which is now a product of its own emergence. There is no need to cite the classical bust on a pedestal: it's already there. It's new shape is mannered, a seemingly tiny figure, while Blockhead flaunts its over-dimensionality. However, it's impossible to say whether it is light or actually heavy. One is forced to reposition oneself in relation to the busts. Their artificial materiality is also disturbing. In Busting Head, Pawel samples diverse sculptural techniques: he carves, models, casts, copies, assembles, removes and provides the Acryl with a patina by applying a coat of synthetic resin. The head exploding to formless material provokes a disgust that is kept in the spell of art, which, intentionally or unintentionally, is reminiscent of Mike Kelley's grotesque material battles, but Pawel remains concrete in both his choice of material and the image. One to one, he casts a blue silicone negative of a wooden African mask that he has found: no longer a negative, but a new mask. Here too, the process of creation and the consistency of the artificial work material determine the form. The politically incorrect spigot on the forehead is actually technically necessary to recast the original mask in the same way over and over. For art, Pawel Ferus duplicates the negative. At the exhibition, they are hung in a group on the wall, exchangeable, but slightly different, To Be Cast.

Pawel Ferus has entitled the exhibition Plasma Reset, showing works in which concept and sculpture have become one in the brief, no longer comprehensible moment of reformatting.

(1) Suplex was on view in February 2011 in solo show at Lokal.int, an exhibition space in Biel.