

# VIBRANT MATTER

14.02.2015 - 29.03.2015



## ENGLISH

On the festive occasion of KIOSK's 5th anniversary, we present the group show *Vibrant Matter*, with works by artists who exhibited with us before, and by new names. The great importance of the materiality of an object or work of art for the artist has been a recurrent topic throughout KIOSK's trajectory. *Vibrant Matter* borrows the title of a book by American political theorist Jane Bennett, in which she makes an ontological analysis of the primary relation between 'man' and 'thing' and of the agency of the thing itself, what she calls 'vital materialism' or 'thing-power'.

The fascination for the concept of 'materiality' seems at odds with the prevailing economic tendency for hiding the physical processes of production from our view. Our contemporary Western society is driven by digital technology and keeps evolving towards an exclusively knowledge-based economy. The remaining production activities are moved to industrial areas set apart from residential neighbourhoods, or to faraway low-wage countries. This has undeniable effects on our relationship with matter: we alienate from what we eat, wear, or live in, as we do from the awareness of what is authentic and what is manipulated, what is real and what is virtual.

The artists in this show share a similar artistic awareness of the process of dematerialization: they counter standardized industrial production with a personalized language in which the main concern is the search for the essence of form and matter in relation to man and our architectural environments. Built on the power of association, a simple gesture, the autonomous form and a minimum of material used for its own sake, the resultant works are 'poor', often radically austere, with a surprisingly tangible effect.

Throughout the exhibition, a recurrent use of raw materials and everyday materials stripped of their basic functionality through a process of personalization can be noticed. Some of the pieces here seem to float in between the iconic object and the generic – because essentially industrially produced – object. In *Surface secluded objects*, Kato Six investigates the ornamental possibilities of Formica and concrete surfaces. In Analia Saban's *Big Bang Series (in Ten Steps)*, concrete progressively shapes an expanding universe to merge, eventually, into a dense mass of marble.

Saban's concreted-over, rigorous canvasses stand in stark contrast to Katinka Bock's changing *Speaker's Moscow*. This copper floor piece was created in the course of *Nebenwege*, the artist's recent show at KIOSK; the corrosive 'result' of salt on textile and copper is here again a part of a temporary composition. Time's expression in matter is also apparent in Edith Dekyndt's new works. The *Domestic Dust Series* frames twelve years' worth of lint and dust gathered from her dryer. The lacquerwork in *Nanthanwan Temple 004 – 006* was applied in numerous layers according to traditional Thai methods. Dekyndt's extremely laborious, 'slow' approach results in a reduced image that contains a latent, layered expressiveness.

In Benoit Platéus' jug series, complex temporal and creative processes are merged into a single container shape. Found bottles with dark room chemical remainders are translated in urethane resin mouldings titled *Fuji Hunt* and *Kodak Flexicolor*, or, in Platéus' own words: "The works evoke all the images that could have been." Another 'container piece' is *Untitled (Car Trunk #2)*, that belongs to a series of stripped car trunks by Matias Faldbakken. This container charged with associations of transport and industry is manipulated by Faldbakken into an unusable, nearly illegible form.

The notion of an interchangeable, modular uniformity returns in Camilla Løw's *Spring Rain*. The wooden frame and the vase forms suggest any number of combinations. Eva Rothschild's allegorical totem figures of *Bad Moon* and *Trophy* embody the principle of formal repetition. Unique bead, eye, or moon shapes proliferate halfway between formalism and a new tribalism. Both these artists are indebted to the visual canon of modernism and minimalism, but they make it the plaything of their idiosyncratic, often implicit or obscure visual language.

The explicit combination of industrial materials and geometric forms on the one hand, and manual techniques or traditional crafts on the other hand – this tension between material and form – is also evident in Thea Djordjadze's work. With a minimalist sensitivity her smooth steel sculpture positions itself opposite the seemingly ragged, pigmented carpet. This poetic, suggestive arrangement of objects is continued in Valérie Mannaerts' handmade curtain piece *Palms with no Shade*. This spatial collage is an interplay of proportions, layers, and motifs with organic yet always formally delineated forms. The curtain suggests a scenography, and interacts with other pieces: with *Domestic Wildcard*, 190 cm, 35 t, H. Albrecht Steinmetz, for instance; an absurdist 'pillar-pedestal' modeled by Karsten Födinger on his own height.

Natural and artificial, familiar and unusual forms seek each other out, resulting in direct, vibrant confrontation. And here lies the essence of *Vibrant Matter*, where the impact of the works on display is directly linked with their inexplicable ambiguity. "For me – making work is about creating something experiential – visual, physical, spatial – but also something that refuses legibility, or an immediate summing-up. It just is itself" (Eva Rothschild, in *Slyce*).