

**Vasco Futscher - „Masks, Tablets and Loose Birds“**

6.4.-18.5.2019, Opening 5.4.2019, 6pm

In the person of Vasco Futscher, annex 14 is showing an artist who accesses the history of modernism as if it were an open archive whose current artistic potential he explores by means of sculptures and objects. The material he has deliberately chosen for this is one that is rather unusual in art: ceramics. The artist avails himself of its independent aesthetic and material-related history, its handcraft and industrial biography and a kind of reference, against which certain themes take on an additional or completely different nuance. On the other hand, the artist is also concerned to examine the extent to which historically disparate visual traditions can be related to one another through this material so as to formulate new formal and thematic facets. Observing the work phases of Vasco Futscher to date, ceramics proves to be an altogether interesting and surprising instrument of reflection.

The artist starts with a pictorial archive covering the whole of human history. He removes things and objects from their historical context thereby gaining for himself a design vocabulary that is freely available but has also been historically and technologically shaped. In his current group of works he refers, among other things, to pattern catalogues of serially produced industrial parts that remain concealed beneath the surface of the final product. His interventions into the ceramic mass are inspired by industrial forms and give his works the aura of blanks reminiscent of mould shapes or model constructions. The decision to work in variations or families and, as in concept art, to query an idea as to its inner aesthetic wealth and its reflexive-analytical potential enables the artist to develop a dense narrative strand with numerous pointers. In doing so, he brings into focus in his current series different aspects of modernism, its social utopia with its faith in technical progress, science and the art of engineering.

We encounter another approach to historical themes in his masks series. In the history of art and culture the mask is a global motif. An artistic engagement with, and an analytical and aesthetic treatment of them, therefore, open up fields of reflection that include both ritual or philosophical aspects and the human being's game with delusions and confusions. In the theatre, masks and masquerades cause mischief by confusing appearance and reality, and drive their wearers through the abysses of human existence. Death masks attempt to capture the essence of a lived life and preserve it for posterity. As magic objects, they are part of invocation rituals which are indebted to a mythical grasp of time. Vasco Futscher's masks also reflect on time and transience. Their forms seem incomplete, the ceramic material seems brittle yet hard. What is more, formal pointers to industrial shapes, for example, for the eye sockets, are a subtle means of bringing into play a historically defined era along with temporality as such.

Elisabeth Gerber