

Wilde

PRESS RELEASE
NOT VITAL
BUN DI BASEL
09.02.- 25.05.2019

Wilde is delighted to open its new space in Basel with a solo show by Not Vital, BUN DI BASEL, which means "Hello Basel" in Romansh. The Graubünden artist has assembled a large group of works specifically for this exhibition. The pieces presented at 37 Angensteinerstrasse, some of them monumental, are all emblematic of Not Vital's production.

Two similar sculptures, made of different materials - one made of fibreglass and plaster, the other of stainless steel - create a link between the exterior and the interior of the gallery. Almost 4 metres high, Also, Adam One Afternoon I and II vibrate with a living presence, simultaneously evoking an archaic shell, a bone structure, a marine animal or a fantastic vehicle. The combination of the organic and the abstract, also very present on Untitled with 1 ear (2016) and Untitled (2011), mesmerizes by its sensuality.

An erected Tongue, made in 2018, acquires the same totemic status as Also, Adam I and II. Since 1985, this organ, most often of a bovine origin, has been a recurrent motif in Not Vital's work. Over the years, it has been made in various sizes and materials. The pattern, sometimes oversimplified, has a phallic dimension that is difficult to overlook. As is so often the case, the artist excels in his use of the visual understatement: the significant part embodies the whole with great relevance. The elegant Double Lotus, created in 2010, and the imposing Modern Medieval II, complete this ensemble. The mineral, animal, and plant kingdoms mix, merge and sometimes collide. For once, art opens up new perspectives to the living.

Further on, a Dreamstone, made in 2003 and entitled Blood, establishes an intimate dialogue between China, where these dream stones found in Dali have been admired for centuries, and the native region of Not Vital. The work, consisting of a marble plate embedded into a geometric plaster structure, acts as a condensed version of a larger universe. "I wasn't aware of it at first, until someone told me that it's a bit like looking through a window in the Engadine," the artist observes.

Graubünden is also omnipresent in the group of 6 ceramics and 6 unpublished drawings hanging on the walls of the gallery. Here, with a staggering economy of detail, Not Vital invokes the elements, always prone to unleash the mountains and nature. One also thinks of the islands of Chilean Patagonia, where the artiste owns a rear base. The view of a sky as vast as the universe, the coasts of a continent. At all times, the artist goes to the essentials and offers the viewer a unique aesthetic experience.

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Not Vital was born in Sent, in the Engadine region, in 1948. A true nomad, the Swiss artist has lived and worked in places as diverse as Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, New York, Lucca, Sent, Agadez and Chilean Patagonia. These different places have always had a direct influence on Not Vital's artistic production, whose works have been presented at the MoMA and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Kunsthalle in Vienna and the Ullens Centre of Contemporary Art in Beijing, among others. In 2016, a large exhibition of his work was held in Yorkshire Sculpture Park, prior to the Bündner Kunstmuseum in Chur organizing the first monographic museum exhibition dedicated to Not Vital in Switzerland in 2017. In 2018, one of Finland's main museums, Ateneum, presented 26 paintings by the Graubünden artist.

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