

## **BONE DEEP, SUNS SPEAK**

BENJAMIN COHEN

For his first solo exhibition at the MAAB Gallery, Benjamin Cohen (UK, 1986), presents a series of recent works. A dialogue created between very disparate images and objects emphasises how the young British artist uses time and space as a bridge between past and future, between personal memories and collective archetypes, between the unconscious and contemporary languages and uses.

The title of the exhibition alludes to something that is part of us, right down to our very bones. But this thing also turns out to be connected to extremes that are as far away from us as the sun and the stars, if we subscribe to the theory that the calcium and other minerals in human bones came from a supernova that exploded several million years ago. So the objects in the exhibition are reconfigured: starting with familiar forms, their shapes and structures are altered. On the one hand, they refer to everyday objects, but on the other, they embrace an otherness that makes them simultaneously domestic and disturbing. Cohen's works are portals between the times of history and human narratives, with their desires, fears and obsessions.

These are not neo-Dadaist assemblages or surrealist associative games. The objects are conceived and presented not as the sum of different parts, but as a single configuration whose sharp formal finish recalls futuristic and extreme industrial design products. This polished, shimmering appearance, captivating in both form and colour (like an iridescent, metallic and vaguely sulphurous painter's palette), also carries a subtly paradoxical and suspicious implication, sometimes openly sinister, at other times ambiguously elusive. This is evident, for example, in certain details of the works: two pieces of smoked salmon at the foot of a chrome-plated bumper frame, the cast of a duck's beak from a carnival mask, at once harmless and mocking, stacked on the floor or hidden inside a birdcage, or a truncated pyramid filled with used canisters of nitrous oxide, a gas used as a general anaesthetic in medicine, but also as a cheap euphoric drug, a sort of prototype for a monument to social unease and hallucination.

In this way Benjamin Cohen moves from creation to recreation, citing technological development and reconnecting the distant past with the present through a glimpse of the future. This is Cohen's reaction to homologation. He reclaims an identity that is first and foremost an individual one, with roots as deep as bones and related to his personal, even dramatic experience. But it is also the identity of a transcultural and transnational world in which time and human history collapse onto one another.



**BENJAMIN COHEN** was born in 1986 in UK. He lives and works in London.

Through experimentation with expanded notions of sculpture and time-based media, as well as a continuous engagement in collaborative practice, Cohen works with archaeological objects, archival images, film and sound to construct structures that explore notions of 'the architecture of memory'. Benjamin Cohen was shortlisted for the Mark Tanner Sculpture Award (2021). Recent exhibitions include *Studio Response 03* at Saatchi Gallery in London (2022).

### **Informazioni essenziali**

MAAB Gallery

via Nerino 3 – 20123 Milano

From May 25<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup> 2022

Open from Monday to Friday, 10.30 am – 6 pm

Opening: Thursday, May 25 | 6 – 8 pm

### **Per informazioni e materiali**

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