

MAI 36 GALERIE

Stephan Balkenhol

Vernissage: Thursday, November 02, 2023, 6pm
Exhibition Duration: November 03, 2023 – January 06, 2024
Opening Hours: Tue-Fr, 11 – 6:30pm, Sat 11 – 5pm

We are pleased to present new sculptures by the artist Stephan Balkenhol at Mai 36 Galerie.

Stephan Balkenhol (*1957 in Fritzlar, Germany) enjoys international recognition as one of the most renowned contemporary sculptors. Since the 1980s, the artist has been intensively involved with figurative sculpture and has developed his own inimitable formal language. After studying at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, he created his first figurative wooden sculptures in 1983 - a nude man and woman - placing the human figure at the centre of his artistic work; continuously varying the basic prototypes.

The roughly hewn and multicolored sculptures make the handicraft process of creation and thus the sculptural process visible through their appearance. Roughness and precision are combined. In a stoic pose, figures carved out of a solid wooden trunk, silent and at peace with themselves, seem to gaze into space. What is striking is the ambivalence of their expression. They cannot be pinned down to any state of mind, linger anonymously and enigmatically. They function as wooden mirrors for their viewers, in which they reflect themselves. Their presence almost automatically raises questions about their own perception and existence.

Balkenhol's œuvre includes sculptures and reliefs carved out of wood or cast in bronze as well as a wide range of drawings. The drawings are often preliminary studies for sculptures, sketches of ideas or concepts, which, however, do not necessarily have to be elaborated sculpturally and thus become works of their own.

Stephan Balkenhol's works are represented worldwide in important museums, exhibitions and collections as well as in public. His most significant solo exhibitions include the Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg (2020), Kunsthalle Emden, Germany (2018), Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2018), MMOMA - Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russia (2016), Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren, Germany (2015), Kunstmuseum Ravensburg, Germany (2014). Since 1992 he holds a professorship in sculpture at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Karlsruhe. Stephan Balkenhol lives and works in Karlsruhe and Berlin, Germany, and Meisenthal, France.

Mai 36 Galerie has been working with the artist for over 30 years.