

METRO PICTURES

Olaf Breuning

“The Life”

June 4- July 31, 2015



Naomi and the World, 2015. Wallpaper on MDF panel.

Always a beguiling social pundit, Olaf Breuning has created an immersive installation of steel sculptures and large photo collages to continue his discerning humor and astute visual language. These new works identify the artist's mind and studio as conspicuous sites of transformation and production, where surges of stimuli from daily life are methodically registered, metabolized and repurposed.

For Breuning, 25 imposing round collages of his staged photographs model the world we find ourselves in. Measuring up to 9 feet tall, they reference cartoon text bubbles, and are busting with torrents of anonymous characters and chocolate coins, earth-shaped bean bags, brain models and rubber breasts – everyday commodities that often reiterate other objects. Independent narratives swivel within each orb, and link together to present the progression of recent history as a multivalent, dynamic collision of outbursts rather than a linear itinerary. Their round shapes add vivacity to the tumbling compositions, but also intimate a sense of ephemerality and instability.

Amidst the colliding spheres stand five steel sculptures that represent figures submerged in a welter of visual information. Polished sheets of reflective steel are trimmed into simple shapes like the heart symbol or a thumbs-up, and erected on metal scaffolding that evokes the scope of towering outdoor sculptures. Surrounding collages sprawl across these mirror-like surfaces along with reflections of visitors to the gallery. These otherwise blank forms keenly observe and momentarily camouflage inside a buzzing canopy of images, and suggest an attitude towards contemporary culture that is at once receptive and afflicted.

Olaf Breuning has collaborated with the Public Art Fund, Maja Hoffman's LUMA Foundation and Art Basel for large public installations at New York's Central Park, Elevation 1049 in Gstaad and Collins Park, Miami. His films, photographs, drawings and sculpture have been exhibited at the Paul Klee Museum, Bern; Migros Museum, Zurich; Centre d'Art Contemporain la Chapelle du Geneteil, France; Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland; SMAK/Museum of Fine Arts, Gent, Belgium; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany; MoMA PS1, New York.

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