

Valentin Carron - 08.11 > 23.12.2011

Fade Walter

Rodolphe Janssen Gallery is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of Valentin Carron (Swiss, born 1977, lives and works in Martigny) in Belgium.

Valentin Carron reproduces objects from his immediate surroundings: symbolically charged objects (sculptures, architectural fragments) taken from the reality of his region and its "landscape". Through the appropriation of cultural emblems or decorative ornaments from the vernacular culture, he questions the meaning of tradition and authenticity, the aesthetic concepts of kitsch and the modern ideal.

"The Valais, where I live and work, is an area that supposedly embodies the romantic, natural and wild character of Switzerland. A country of traditions. But this notion of "tradition" was in fact entirely invented in the late nineteenth century. This then, gave rise to a genuine political will to build a national cultural identity. Gradually, we started to manufacture pseudo-authentic objects."

The works of Valentin Carron are re-formulated; synthetic materials often predominate over solid materials; sometimes, however, it is the other way around. Valentin is interested in the true-false, the substitute; he redistributes values through his appropriation. Through this play of materials, the highly symbolic and ambiguous meanings of the works are revealed.

In this exhibition, Valentin Carron presents three different groups of works.

On the one hand, Valentin appropriates stained glass slabs from a local bank. His "objects-paintings" are born in this way. Stained glass slab is a technique that dates from the late 1920s. It is a stained glass made with thick glass, dyed in the mass, set in concrete or synthetic resin. To create this hyper-realization of an abstract subject, Carron has reproduced the windows as seen by day, from the outside. That is at once the dullest and most gloomy view, since the light does not pass through the coloured glass. Carron uses polystyrene, fibre, resin and acrylic paint because these materials "help the viewer to remove any form of sentimentality or other forms of affect and facilitate a more cold and analytical reading".

Reproductions of bronze wall rings used to tie cattle in front of houses punctuate this first group of "paintings", works from a series of 18 pieces. Every single piece is unique in its size and is formed by combining three different rod thicknesses and three different diameters of ring attachments. The titles also, are combinations of three words - cercle, archaïque, mate (circle, archaic, matt) - used to describe each piece. Alternatively, Carron has sometimes added the word 'fade' (bland) to evoke a sense of boredom, fatigue; this is where he organizes the auto-sabotage of his proposal.

Cercle archaïque mate
Mate cercle archaïque
Male fade cercle
Archaïque fade cercle
Mate archaïque archaïque
Cercle cercle archaïque

The titles of the displayed rings put together sound like a sort of primitive and brutalist poetry.

Finally, "Walter" is a more personal work, an almost self-portrait; a casting in painted Crystal of the feet of a man wearing an old pair of knitted socks with holes in them. Here, the prototypical and popular figure of the deprived and depressed poet or artist is invoked. "Walter" is the third

version of a series whose title is always the name of a neighbourhood derelict Carron happens to know. An undeniable presence, both delicate and light, this pair of feet displays obvious surrealist and Magrittean references.

While seemingly making fun of everything, Carron strikes back at mediocrity. He presents abusive authority, banal ugliness, and false authenticity. A world where strength and weakness make a weak pair.

Valentin Carron has recently had solo exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, (2010), La Conservera, Murcia (2009), Kunsthalle, Zurich (2007) as well as at the Eva Pressenhuber gallery (Zurich) and 303 Gallery (New York); in 2012 and 2013, exhibitions are planned at the Kordansky gallery (Los Angeles), 303 (NY) and Kunsthalle Bern. He has previously had exhibitions at, among others, Kunsthaus (Zurich), Sculpture Center (NY), CAPC (Bordeaux) ...