

Philip Seibel: Gehäuse

January 13–February 25, 2022

Opening Reception: Friday, January 13, 6–8 PM

Lower Level

Over the course of the past twenty years, Berlin-based artist Philip Seibel has continuously sought to expand his painting and sculptural practices. In some early works he grappled with making paintings that did not need to engage with the medium's specificity. These early works consisted of copies of wood veneers that he would typically exhibit along with real veneers mounted on aluminum panels that could easily be mistaken as real pieces of wood given their painstaking fabrication process. This was an early foray into developing a constructed space within the framework of the medium. Seibel's unique investigation into the simulacra is carried forward for this current showing of sculptures and drawings.

In his first exhibition at Magenta Plains and in New York, the artist presents his most recent body of work: metal enclosures teetering between industrial design objects and lecterns. Typically hung overhead, their high position on the wall and overall morphology reminds the viewer of both mini-split air conditioning units and shrines found in spaces of devotion.

In these objects, Seibel fuses seemingly incommensurate elements to form a cohesive whole; industrial materials and fabrication techniques are paired with artefacts including feudal or agrarian scenes of the Middle Ages in western Europe. These found and altered wax reliefs are nothing more than kitsch, they signal a popular adoration for a bygone era, one that is meant to represent a feeling of devotion and unity towards the continent, but was perhaps never there. Meanwhile the industrial aesthetic almost feels borrowed from the Power Mac G5 tower of the mid-aughts, similarly a moment when there may have been a more utopic outlook in regards to procession of technology. The fascia of the sculptures usually have some baffle element that animates one's perception of the sculpture, metaphorically pairing the aforementioned formal elements with a notion of god in the machine.

Seibel's encasements are titled "Gehäuse" meaning casing or enclosure in German, but also an outdated word for home, room, or study. In the same way his objects function as propositions. *Gehäuse*, both the title for the exhibition and of the individual works, is reminiscent of an engraving by Albrecht Dürer from 1514 titled *Hieronymus im Gehäuse* depicting a scene with Saint Jerome sitting at a writing desk with a sleeping lion and a dog in the foreground. There is a tension in this engraving, largely the impending volatility of both a sleeping dog and lion, while mankind persists at their desk. One perceives this same confluence of powers being enacted in the presence of these enclosures, a proposition for past, present, and future.

The same game of contradictions and obfuscation of meaning is rehearsed by two sets of pencil drawings presented in display racks common to real estate office in urban areas. Drawn during Seibel's wanderings in nature, these phantasmal drawings—details of organic structures, roots, rocks, and pieces of animal fur—are so delicate and modest that they are barely visible. They suggest that mere human rumination, or experience, has become almost impossible. As if looking at art wasn't at times a difficult activity in its own right, Seibel's artworks necessitate us to get very close and, even more so, to tilt our heads upwards.

-Rosario Güiraldes

Philip Seibel (b. Hagen, DE, 1980) is a sculptor with a background in instrument making and a deeply historical, research-based practice. He received his MFA from the Academy of Art in Düsseldorf under Peter Döig in 2011. His selected solo exhibitions include: *The Word for World is Forest*, Union Pacific, London, UK (2022); *Houseworming*, with Josefine Reisch, Sundry, London, UK (2019); *The Yellow Mill*, Soyuz, Pescara, IT (2019); *Die Zuversicht der Dinge*, Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2017); Museum Osthaus, (with Lukas Schmenger and Andreas Schmitt), Hagen, DE (2016); *Posta Portae No 2*, (with Björn Bock), Hotel Nikko, Düsseldorf, DE (2016); Westminster Waste, London, UK (2015); Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2014); Parkhaus im Malkasten, Düsseldorf, DE (2013); *Totale 6*, Kunstverein Maschinenhaus, Essen, DE (2013); Philara Collection, (with Lukas Schmenger), Düsseldorf, DE (2012); *Format:C*, (with David Ostrowski), Düsseldorf, DE (2011); *Bar im Schmela Haus*, Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf, DE (2010). He has also been included in group exhibitions such as: *I heard myself close my eyes, then open them*, (with Patricia L. Boyd and K.R.M. Mooney), Braunsfelder, Cologne, DE (2022); *Condo*, Union Pacific, London, UK (2020); *Sie machen was sie wollen*, Boris Georgiev Museum, Varna, BG (2019); *LIT*, Union Pacific, London, UK (2017); *Papier*, (with Thomas Arnolds, Andreas Schulze, Rosemarie Trockel et al.), ak Raum, Cologne, DE (2016); G2 Sammlung Hildebrandt, Leipzig, DE, (2015); *Ex Materia*, (with Max Ruf, Joshua Sex et al.), Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2015); *Eigen + Art*, (with Kai Schiemenz et al.), Leipzig, DE (2015); *17 Abstract Paintings*, (with Jana Schröder, David Ostrowski, Jan-Ole Schieman, Andreas Breunig et al.), Wertheim, Cologne, DE (2014); Palazzo Guaineri delle Cossere, Brescia, IT (2014); *Eigen + Art*, Leipzig, DE (2014); JaLiMa Collection, (with Jan Albers, Erika Hock, and Walter Dahn), Düsseldorf, DE (2014); *Eigen + Art Lab*, Berlin, DE (2013); Studio 1.1, London, UK (2013); Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2013); Cindy Rucker, New York, NY (2013); KIT – Kunst im Tunnel, Düsseldorf, DE (2012); Temporary Gallery, Cologne, DE (2011). The artist lives and works in Berlin, DE.