

PHILIP SEIBEL

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 Dusseldorf 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, Dusseldorf, DE (2016); Westminster Waste, London, UK (2015); Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2014); Parkhaus im Malkasten, Dusseldorf, DE (2013); *Totale 0*, Kunstverein Maschinenhaus, Essen, DE (2013); Philara Collection, (with Lukas Schmenger), Dusseldorf, DE (2012); *Format:C*, (with David Ostrowski), Dusseldorf, DE (2011); *Bar im Schmela Haus*, Kunstsammlung NRW, Dusseldorf, 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 Schiemann, 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), Dusseldorf, 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, Dusseldorf, DE (2012); Temporary Gallery, Cologne, DE (2011). The artist lives and works in Berlin, DE.

Artnet News

2023

artnet news

On View

Here Are 6 of the Most Daring Shows to See This Month (Think Chainsawed Furniture, Hamburger Vases, and Giant Crystals)

These designers are starting the year with a bang.

Adrian Madlener, January 11, 2023

Anne Libby and Philip Seibel at Magenta Plains New York, United States



Anne Libby, *These Days* (2022). Polished cast aluminum.
Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Philip Seibel. Courtesy of Magenta Plains.

In New York's Lower East Side from January 13 to February 25, Magenta Plains is showcasing new wall sculptures by Los Angeles-based Anne Libby that riff on domestic window blinds. Cast in polished aluminum, the intriguing works play with light and deflected reflection as they cascade against stark white backgrounds.

Berlin-based artist Philip Seibel's "Gehäuse" exhibition runs concurrently at the gallery. Like Libby, Seibel challenges the perception of readily available construction materials and consumer products to create sculptural objects that serve as contemporary tombs, shrines, and ornate storage boxes. The works demonstrate his ability to satirize the typology of everyday items through meticulous craft techniques. He also distorts the pieces with engravings of agrarian scenes from the Middle Ages.

Art Viewer
June 11, 2022

Art Viewer



Prompted by depictions in the fairy tales by Brothers Grimm and Herder, the forest in German literature is romanticised with towering trees, abundant greenery and stretching vistas into an arena where normal rules don't apply and anything can happen. For 'The Word for World is Forest' – the title borrowed from Ursula Le Guin's novel set in an Edenic forest, Berlin-based artist Philip evokes ambivalent feelings: the drabness of domestic appliances intertwined with the sensations of wading through grass and marvelling at the looming nature above.

The four sculptures are hung above human height, across both floors of the gallery. Intrigued by the habits of worshippers, Philip's research leads him to cathedrals, tombs and shrines which so often ask observers to crane their necks. Philip strives to instil his art with a similar transcendence. 'What,' he asks, 'are the mechanisms that let us experience the sublime?' His laborious process combines antiquated woodworking techniques with surfaces, materials and methods of industrial fabrication. Despite not replicating radiators – their form and placement more reminiscent of air-conditioning units – all four are titled 'Radiator' followed by a word often sparked by an anecdote or the location of a first idea: 'Moyland' is inspired,' he says 'by an actual radiator I admired asserting itself amidst the Beuys drawing collection at the Schloss Moyland in Bedburg-Hau, and 'Mai' refers to Robert Schumann's love song 'Im wunderschönen Monat Mai'.'

However homespun or ambiguous their origin, Philip aims for an equation of contradictions – merging traditional craft techniques with contemporary sleights of hand. He contemplates variations in the process – often acquiring a found object before manipulating its intention. In 'Radiator (Morgen)', for instance, he recasts a wax relief, a transfer of Albrecht Dürer's drawing 'Head of an old man', before cropping and carving it to leave it in a state of ambiguity. Each sculpture is a facade of the mundane receptacle it first appears to be, individually manipulated to confuse and deny expectation.

The gallery becomes a medium for him to manoeuvre, too – Philip paving the gallery in a forest-floor of carpet tiles from a previous corporate office. The effect is unnerving: he succeeds in usurping the space's normal role as an environment for contemplation; the antithesis of calming nature itself. Meanwhile, the eight drawings in the window, all depicting faint murmurs of form from his forest wanderings, are displayed on the kind of anonymous cable displays used in estate agents' windows. Again, he defies easy view-ing: whether it's a sculpture or a drawing, Philip presents his art imperviously, making us long to get closer, but struggling to. Like worshippers, or walkers, always looking up.

-Written by Ted Targett



Philip Seibel, *The Word for World is Forest*, 2022, exhibition view, Union Pacific, London

Art Viewer
April 2, 2019

Art Viewer



Objects from our daily lives, poor materials, *objet trouvé*, but also fetishes that, when contaminated with the cold rigor of artificial elements, lose their original functions to rediscover the generating power of their memory.

Objects that become images, sculptures, experience, time and thus read in the present the signs of their own past.

In the works of Philip Seibel, time is relived through the opaque filter of nostalgia. To put it differently, nostalgia *makes the past beat with life*, distancing it from the automatism of the perception of present.

Through an approach that combines traditional techniques such as woodturning, marquetry or faux-bois painting with more contemporary ones like industrial paints and manufacturing, Seibel experiments with a kind of practice that favors the process of doing.

He investigates the intrinsic qualities of materials, giving his structures a transient nature that catches them in the limiting grip between freedom and constraint. The impulse of retrieving the lost time of things combines with the technic ability and the taste for formal composition.

The Yellow Mill gets its name from one of the exhibited works: an everyday object of our present, a quality finish air conditioning unit, which secretly hints at the sobriety of a design piece from the '80s, while also bearing on its surface the indelible marks of the life it has lived.

Similarly, the drawings, embellished with natural elements and extracts of organic structures, emit the aura of something distant, forced into the limited and artificial space of an ordinary and unremarkable support that is an office board.

In this fragile intimacy, the object extends beyond the limits of self, defining its own intrinsic triviality in an atmosphere of magic oddity.

Seibel's works feed on a disturbing tension where layers and distances mix. Intersecting between past and present, they fall into the paradox of the folds of time, just like that painting, busy with sounds, voices and noises, that is the contemporary metropolis of which these works intercept the contradictions. A kind of duality that generates from the forced sum of old and new, suspended in the balance between the consumed romanticism of history and the draining frenzy of these days, which ends up altering history's features.

His sculptures shape up to be props of a *mise en récit* of which they develop a plot, sometimes giving back a false clue or revealing a mystery.

The silent transformation that overcomes the immobilism of their “being object” is the result of the fragmented unity of echoes of other ages. The effect of these reminiscences on the present is what redesigns the history of the objects, in a way that makes them almost shortcuts in time – not time that wears out, but one the endures. Time that brings together the hybrid interval of their presence with the pure duration of their permanence.

– Marialuisa Pastò



Philip Seibel, *The Yellow Mill*, 2019, exhibition view, SOYUZ, Pescara

Art Viewer
March 9, 2019

Journal

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Philip Seibel, *Radiator (Columns)*, 2019, 106 x 32 x 21 cm, walnut wood, mdf, veneer, PUR paint, UP resin, speaker cloth, stainless steel vent cover, screws

Mousse Magazine

February 2, 2017

MOUSSE



Philip Seibel "The Confidence of Things" at Berthold Pott Gallery, Cologne, 2017

Courtesy: Berthold Pott Gallery, Cologne

Berthold Pott Gallery is pleased to present its second solo exhibition featuring new works by Philip Seibel (b. 1980).

In his current exhibition, *The Confidence of Things*, Seibel presents three pairs from his 'Panels' series (painting on bare or wooden-veneered aluminium honeycomb panels) and sculptures that oscillate between object, *objet trouvé* (wooden root), furniture, and interior, as well as two delicate pencil drawings of wax structures.

The theme of the 'Panels' is defined by the structure in the wood itself: either using real veneer mounted on an aluminium honeycomb panel or as an imitation of woodgrain, painted onto the aluminium panel with the help of pigments and lacquers, as well as special paintbrushes and sanding and polishing processes.

The current exhibition features a sculpture consisting of two nearly identical wooden roots that lie next to each other on a cabinet-like piece of furniture: original and copy. The furniture constructed by the artist appears to be a hybrid from various epochs: Intricately and finely lathed legs are reminiscent of the technical attention to detail and perfection of the Renaissance, while the body of the 'cabinet' covered in brown faux leather triggers associations to the sober high-tech design of the 1980s. In strong contrast to this are the seemingly archaic and mighty wooden roots: The one is an *objet trouvé*, while the other, nearly identical root has been cast in synthetic resin and, similar to the panels, covered by the artist with several layers of finely painted wooden structures.

Whereas previous exhibitions of works by the artist were strongly marked by the rhythms and formal-aesthetic dimensions of natural structures, such as those found in wooden veneers and crystal cultures, the focus of the current show is laid – more decidedly than usual – on the meaning and function of the copy. In this context, the artist is interested in two aspects in particular: 'the copy as a weapon against the inflation of the concept of creativity' and 'the copy as decoy for verticality'.

On the theme of 'the copy as a weapon against the inflation of the concept of creativity', Seibel states: 'Copying is the opposite of original creation, which is so characteristic of the artistic cliché. Born out of the longing to circumnavigate this stereotype of the creative individual, since nowadays everyone is creative as soon as they compile their Spotify playlists or individualise their iPhones. Creativity and consumption have thus become so strongly amalgamated with each other (at least conceptually and in the perception of the majority) that, for me, the resistance against the consumerist cult has led to an aversion to the obviously creative and individual, i.e. the classically "artistic". No painterly clichés (gesture, thick layers of oil paint, etc.), no creative outpourings that could be quickly perceived as being "art". Instead, veneered panels which are reminiscent of doors and table tops, and objects that are closer to pieces of furniture than to sculpture. References to craftsmanship and design instead of to art history. As in earlier works, the copy leads to a rhythm as the return of the same, or at least of the similar. The copy and repetition as an antithesis of the cliché of creativity, as a weapon against the inflation of the concept of creativity, but also as a stylistic means of consolidation, including rhythms, rhymes, and samples.'

And on the theme of 'the copy as decoy for verticality', the artist explains: 'Through the juxtaposition of original and copy (both in the paintings and in the sculptures) and the total blurring of the borders between these, the viewer is motivated to step closer and discover: What is real, what is fake; how can one tell the difference between the two? The viewer is thus drawn into the details and the structures of the works, seduced by the perfect surfaces into the depths of the structures. The result is a vertical analysis of the works, which contrasts with the horizontal processing of information in everyday life. The almost infinite fineness of the details is extremely important in this regard. Instead of in one hundred thumbnail images per second on Instagram (many, but "flat": i.e. horizontal), the viewer should find his happiness in the infinity of details and structures (few, but "deep": i.e. vertical). The layer-by-layer exploration of the work through time and patience in front of the original, as opposed to the fast-paced "consumption" of digital mini-reproductions.'

As in his previous exhibitions, this show is also marked by Seibel's use of contradictions: The wood, the root, the tree and its growth structures as representative and symbol of the natural, the organic, indeed the archaic, is juxtaposed with a world of artificiality (the use of industrial materials, such as aluminium honeycomb panels or lacquer, and techniques, such as sanding, lacquering, casting, and veneering). The artist's act of copying thus becomes a link between the past, the archaic, the natural and the present and future – and thus becomes a tool to combat the flood of the pseudo-creative.

Daily Lazy
January 20, 2017

Daily Lazy




Images courtesy the artist and Berthold Pott Gallery

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