

Maarten Van Roy

ORACLE

2018 June 30 – August 3

opening June 29 / 7pm

www.fiebach-minninger.com

galler@fiebach-minninger.com

ORACLE (debacle)

Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere, becomes the ruler of the world.

Vladimir Putin (2017)

Curtain pole sets are common goods in hardware stores. They consist of a rod, mounting equipment and attachable ends, which feign the appearance of having been expensively crafted. These sets include rings, which are used to hang the fabric in front of the window in order to block the view. You find solid wood models, but those in beige and white plastic veneer are the better buy. The individual components are consolidated into shrink-wrapped, bar shaped units in preparation of the transport following their sale. One of the ends of the bar exhibits a ribbed bulge. It is cheap packaging, but it keeps everything together when pushed through the cushions of a compact class until it arrives and seeks to tie the room together of yet a further home. Before the wrapper would have been sliced open and before the individual parts could be assembled and turned into an emblematic detail, correlating with the bourgeois will to individualized design, Maarten Van Roy cut the bland routine short. He molded the package and filled it with very hot, liquid bronze. What subsequently cooled off and what I later saw in a very cold state at Van Roy's solo exhibition "En Face" (Schmidt & Handrup, Berlin, 2014) was an elongated item, leaning against the door of a ramshackle desire.

The exhibition also included two greyhound figures made of red terracotta. Van Roy bartered the garden statues in an antiquity shop in Berlin. Both are missing their right ears. Where the intact content of the sets of poles is solidified in the imagination of their purpose, the simultaneous ear damage imagines a performative future for the historically believed and repeated notion of the readymade by reducing its profane value. The poles are hybrids of two budding and yet opposing artistic strategies. On the one hand, they are classical sculptures in the sense that they are codifications of a form, involving a mold and the subsequent production of replicas in a durable material. On the other hand, they are an image of a readymade – an image of the avant-garde understanding of the object that had turned against durability. Van Roy brings together two things that are conditioned by their difference. The readymade followed the sculpture and became, after the erosion of its radicalism, a tool of the sculptor in order to speak about the object in its different contexts.

The dog figures were also part of Van Roy's solo exhibition "Kevin Spacey" at the Simultanhalle in Cologne (2016). In the yard of the actual exhibition space Van Roy positioned constellations whose materiality, condition and orientation were at the limit of the reality of the self-imposed area. One of the sets of rods leaned against the black, corrugated facade. In both the yard and the exhibition space, there lay a thick and massive tree trunk. The respective barks were dry and had started to detach from the logs. Axe heads were wedged into the hardwood. This framework of tree and tool fragments suggests a bold becoming without a future. If the cliché of the sculptor fables the artist as a free, self-expressive craftsman, then Van Roy seems to reverse the ratio between the work and the artist. The tree trunks remain blank. They are not overwritten by the artist's own revisions, but rather radiate in the form of their self-conception. Van Roy's great sculptural project seems to be disrupting senses of order, in order to eschew disruption as a moment that vitalizes order. The substantive material for these disruptions is his role as sculptor, which can only be visualized in the conception of its fragility.

The fabled self is situated in a network of attempts to order being. The fabled self puts grooves in the material, so that it is no longer subdued by the tensions. If it decides that there are enough grooves in the lifeless material, then its existence has materialized, and it can vicariously assure us that our bodies are something in excess to the rest of the world. Van Roy does not put grooves in the wood. In their exhibition, in their exposition, his works' forms appear to dissipate from their object-being as impressively as carbon tablets in a glass of water. A sediment forms in the bottom of the glass and, before the last sip, the remaining liquid should be swirled and swallowed.

The exhibition "Oracle" is Van Roy's counterpoint to a self-conception that attempts to rank us higher than any other matter. His works seem to be a great, enduring measure that performatively materializes a marauding self-perception as rational beings. In ORACLE, crudely made skeleton hearts line up in the gallery like an incomplete string of pearls in which a romantic heart could hardly be included. Their forms lean in opposite directions, quietly turning away in protest. They are not symbols, they don't symbolize hearts. Forming the skeletons, though, would not be possible without love. As objects of intuition, they point out the construction of the collective truth of the biological self. They are actors that bristle at dialectically falsified existences without understanding themselves as sculptural products of a meaningless third truth. In ORACLE, they refer to a constellation in between other constellations, embodying the impossibility of their evaluation.

Van Roy's works show us that we are nothing more than a possibility. Even though we know that every measurement falsifies the object of investigation, we generate futures out of statistics. In opposition to that, an oracle points out something that is not, because it is futuristic as a possibility of reality. It might be realized, but perhaps its content, simultaneous with the future, will only be possible because it exists. An oracle does not evaluate. It captures a coming condition that does not need to result from our present.

The things have happened, like we did.

Marcel Hiller