

THOMAS JUDISCH. A FLY WITH TWO BLOWS

Feb. 22 – Apr. 12, 2018

Drawing Room is very pleased to present their first solo exhibition by Thomas Judisch (b. 1981), concurrent with the release of his catalogue "A Fly with two Blows", published in cooperation with the Kerber Verlag. In his works, this exceedingly versatile artist uses the mediums of sculpture, drawing, and installation to investigate the bountiful everyday aspects of things and the fleeting situations of daily life, thereby providing us with a key for appreciating the world in its entire incidental beauty. A further aspect of his creative work involves the transformation of art-historical masterpieces, which he scrutinizes, destabilizes, and shifts into the contemporary context of conceptual art through wry interventions.

Nothing in Judisch's work is as it appears at first glance. The fly on the wall you were just about to swat cannot fly away because it is drawn, and the fly swatter slips out of your hand because it is solid bronze. Thomas Judisch skilfully plays with the repertoire of optical illusion and appearance; he is a master at laying "red herrings". From his series *After the breakfast* (2016), the bowl containing the remains of cereal looks from a distance as though it is made of dark wood, but on closer inspection reveals itself, including the porridge, to be cast-

bronze. The half-eaten yellow lollipop *Heike* (2014), from his *Lollipop* series of works, is really made of amber.



The process the artist uses for all of his abstracted 'thing-irritations' is that of transformation. He works like an alchemist, using transmutation to make one material into a different, more valuable one. However, the principle also holds in reverse: Judisch gets enormous pleasure from trivializing supposedly "noble" materials, reducing them to their fundamental value, and from knocking antique portraits or icons of art history off of their pedestals.

Using these two opposing transformational processes, Judisch achieves two things. On the one hand he succeeds in making the everyday, the trivial, and the transitory appear serious and significant. A half-burnt match, a charred piece of kindling, or a bitten-into slice of pizza on a paper plate, (currently on exhibit at NRW-Forum Düsseldorf in the exhibition "Pizza is God"), are 'reinterpreted' in traditional materials such as bronze and ceramics, thus raising them to the ranks of timeless works of art.

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Vulgar toilet graffiti undergoes a similar ennoblement in his series *Toilet Tales* (*Go home Mom, you're drunk*, 2017), which the artist realistically typeset in mosaic to imitate the respective author's handwriting, thus immortalizing these notes from the margins of societal reality, and bequeathing them to posterity.



On the other hand, Judisch takes perverse delight in deconstructing and trivializing "immortal" artefacts already in the canon of art history, and robbing them of their mark of distinction. For example, he takes equestrian statues, familiar to us since ancient times, and reduces them to bronze horse droppings, referencing the respectively immortalized rulers (*Karl* or *Katharina*, 2015) in the title. In his art-postcard series *Masterpieces* (2017), the illustrations of museum masterpieces by Botticelli, Rembrandt or Picasso are completely obliterated in his translation of them into etching – all that remains are the postcards' reverse sides with details about artist and title. This prompts a smile from viewers, who are simultaneously challenged to reconstruct the absent (masterpiece) for themselves in their imaginations.

Another piece in the exhibition, *Venus de Medici* (2015) from the series *Heute war Gestern* (Today was Yesterday), addresses a further aspect of this method in Judisch's work: the discrepancy or semantic shift between what is actually depicted and what is omitted (and of which only the title remains). Ironically, all that remains of the Venus de Medici, which actually embodies the classic figural pose of the "Venus Pudica", or modest Venus, is the pedestal with its dolphin-riding cupids, a decorative attribute of Eros, the god of love.



By selecting iconic classical sculptures to cast for the series *Heute war Gestern*, then reducing them to their plinths and supports, and placing these on standard European pallets, Thomas Judisch is also implicitly questioning the criteria of appraisal in the canon of art-history, the entrenchment of visual memories in the reception of art, and the true character of artefacts. This carefree and radical handling of the masterpieces of European art history is what dissolves the border between fine art and applied art, and between high culture and pop culture, and it is also what makes us chuckle. Thomas Judisch directs the viewer's gaze towards secondary things, towards the negligible, thus creating space for a critical and judgement-free viewing experience.

The sculptor Thomas Judisch, (b. 1981 in Waren, Müritz), lives in Hamburg and Dresden, and studied sculpture at the Muthesius Kunsthochschule with Prof. Elisabeth Wagner. After completing his degree, he transferred to the Academy of Fine Arts, Dresden, where he completed his Meisterschüler (Masters) in 2011 under Prof. Eberhard Bosslet, with a focus on sculpture and spatial conception. Since 2008 he has regularly participated in artist-in-residence programs, including Pilotprojekt Gropiusstadt in Berlin in 2008, Salzamt Linz in 2012, and Goldbekhof e.V. Hamburg in 2012. In 2010 Thomas Judisch received a working scholarship from the State of Schleswig-Holstein. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including in Denmark, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Japan and the USA, among other places.

Solo exhibitions by Judisch have previously been shown, also among other places, in Alkersum/Föhr, Berlin, Dresden and Kiel. His next solo exhibition in a public gallery "Ein Gast und viele Musen" will open March 22, 2018 in Eutin Castle.

Opening and catalogue launch: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

The artist will be in attendance. Stefan Sandrock (artist, Hamburg) will speak at the opening.

Dates: February 22 – April 12, 2018

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Opening hours: Tuesday to Thursday, 12 p.m. –7 p.m. and by appointment.