

Mayday

Stefan Burger
Choral Hypocrite
14.5.–25.6.2023

Event

Sunday, 11 June, 4 p.m.
Artist Talk with Stefan Burger
and Klaus Merkel

In his installation “Choral Hypocrite”, conceived especially for Mayday, Stefan Burger transforms sculpture into photography: waxy bodies connected to each other via colourful tubes, rods, funnels and linkages. Glass spectacle frames on hooks, knobs and curls shine in bright colours. Solidified in the cast and hand-blown, elastic and fragile, functional and decorative, awkward form and elegant design, found and staged meet in the photographs. The reflections of the light give the original objects an artificial appearance, their dimensions can only be roughly located. The exhibition title, borrowed from a composition by Eric Satie, also echoes the ambiguous.

Inspired by experimental arrangements in behavioural biology*, Stefan Burger uses motifs such as bells and clappers as stimuli and triggers for his artistic investigation. Thus, for “Konorski-Klöppel II” (2023), he photographically captures the wax positive for the bronze sculpture of a bell with its inflows and air channels in the process of creation; the intermediate stage of production becomes the work. In this way, he questions his own concept of the work on the one hand and takes up a central theme of photography, capturing the fleeting and transient in order to preserve it as a snapshot.

Another recurring motif in his work is the pair of glasses as a metaphor for the process of perception. Their lenses, which, similar to a camera lens, enable focusing, are missing from the frames made of glass in the two photographs “Optical Bank I + II” (2023). The gaze remains blurred, the visual aid dysfunctional.

*The starting point was the Pavlovian experiments on classical conditioning: a dog is shown a piece of meat and produces saliva. In combination with the sounding of a bell, the food is presented to the animal. After the bell was rung repeatedly in close temporal relation to the offering of food, the dogs finally reacted to the ringing of the bell alone by salivating. Jerzy Konorski, a Polish experimental psychologist, showed in his adaptation of the experiment with the removal of the bell clapper that the bell was merely a stimulus for Pavlov, but not for the dog.

List of works

Stefan Burger, Konorski-Klöppel II, 2023
C-print on aluminium, lacquered wooden frame, museum glass, 121 x 150 cm

Stefan Burger, Optische Bank I, 2023
C-print on aluminium, lacquered wooden frame, museum glass, 47 x 68 cm

Stefan Burger, Optische Bank II, 2023
C-print on aluminium, lacquered wooden frame, museum glass, 47 x 68 cm