

Stubborn Promises

Nicolas Pelzer

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Opening: Friday, September 4 / 6 pm

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In *Stubborn Promises*, Nicolas Pelzer presents works on paper from the series of the same name, as well as new sculptural works from the *Evolving Masters* series. The title refers to a deceptive promise of freedom that emerges from a strict, seemingly universal order.

The tension between structure and openness is evident in the six wall pieces from the *Stubborn Promises* series. These are watercolour papers that were first processed with a laser cutter and depict fictional interpretations of various patterns found in standard flat connectors used in structural carpentry. The actual function of these mundane objects lies in their ability to connect: the regularly arranged hole patterns allow for different assembly methods and thus open up a multitude of interrelated solutions within a given structure.

In a second step, the individual objects are treated with multiple translucent layers of watercolour and gouache. The technically precise creation of the form by the laser cutter is complemented by an individual painterly process, adding a gestural dimension to Nicolas Pelzer's computer-assisted visual and production practice.

The works on paper enter into a dialogue with three new works from the series *Evolving Masters*, which Nicolas Pelzer has continuously developed since 2015 into an extensive, ongoing body of work. Instead of being presented as floating objects, as in the past, the new works appear for the first time as freestanding light sculptures on plinths. With the digitally generated, industrially produced, and subsequently individually reworked hands made of anodised aluminium, the technologically shaped forms encounter a physical, sculptural presence in space.

For Pelzer, the hand is not only a recurring motif but also an interface between the body and technology.¹ It operates tools that expand its capabilities, yet is itself transformed through their use. What happens to human action when it is increasingly mediated, translated, and reproduced by technical processes? And how do the tools created by the hand affect it in return?

Stubborn Promises explores this relationship not as a juxtaposition, but as a reciprocal process. Technical possibilities promise freedom, yet they remain bound to the conditions of their respective systems—just as the variable connections of the flat connector are always tied to the predetermined hole grid structure. Thus, these systems suggest an apparent independence that is, however, constrained within their structural limitations.

Katrin Rollmann

¹ A key theoretical reference point for Nicolas Pelzer is the anthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan (1911–1986), who described human development as a reciprocal evolution of body, hand, tool, and technology. In this understanding, the tool is not merely an external aid to human beings but an extension of their capacity for action. See André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech [Hand und Wort. Die Evolution von Technik, Sprache und Kunst]*, Berlin 1987.