

Maarten Van Roy

ORACLE

2018 June 30 – August 3
opening June 29 / 7pm

www.fiebach-minninger.com
gallery@fiebach-minninger.com

ORACLE (debacle)

Whoever becomes a leader in this sphere, becomes the ruler of the world.
Vladimir Putin (2017)

Hanging curtain sets can be found in many hardware stores. They consist of a rod, mounting equipment and attachable ends, which feign the appearance of having been expensively crafted. These sets also include rings, which are used to hang the fabric in front of the window in order to block the light or view. To be sure, there are also solid wood models, but the beige and white plastic veneer models are a better value. The individual components are consolidated into bar shaped units with shrink-wrap in preparation of transportation following their sale. One of the ends of the bar exhibits a ribbed bulge. It is very cheap packaging, but it keeps everything together while its pushed through the cushions of compact class until it arrives and seeks to round out the ambiance of yet a further home. Before the shrink-wrap could be sliced open and before the individual parts could be installed and turned into an emblematic detail that correlated with the bourgeois will to individualized design, Maarten Van Roy cut the bland routine short. He enclosed the packaged set in a negative mould 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 und 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 terra-cotta. Van Roy bartered the garden statues from a junk dealer 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 long historically believed and repeated notion of the ready-made 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 that they are material 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 ready-made — an image of the notion of the object that, as the avant-garde, has turned against the status quo. Van Roy brings two things together here that are conditioned on their difference from the other. The ready-made followed the sculpture in its erosion of radicalism, and it became a tool of the sculptor for speaking about the object in its different contexts.

The dog figures were also a 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 of the simulation architecture. In both the atrium and exhibition hall itself, there lay a thick and massive tree stump. The respective barks were rotten and had separated from the base of the stump over time. Colored axe heads were wedged into the hardwood. This framework of tree and tool fragments indicates a dry becoming without a future. If the cliché of the sculptor fables an artist as a free, self-expressive craftsman is itself a matter of construction, then Van Roy seems to reverse the ratio between the work and the artist. The tree stumps remain blank. They are not overwritten by the artist's own revisions, but rather radiate in the form of his self-conception. Van Roy's great sculptural project seems to be disrupting senses of order, in order to permanently 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. He puts grooves in the material, so that he is no longer subdued by the tensions. If he decides that there are enough grooves in the lifeless material, then his existence has materialized, and he can vicariously assure us all that our bodies are something in excess of the rest of the world. Van Roy does not put grooves in the wood. In their exhibition, his works' forms appear to dissipate from their object-being as impressively as effervescent tablets in a glass of water. A sediment forms at the bottom and, before the last sip, the remaining liquid should be swirled and then quickly downed.

The exhibition ORACLE is Van Roy's counterpoint to a self-conception, which 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 form leans in two opposite directions to quietly turn away from both in quiet protest. They are not symbols, even though forming the skeletons would not be possible without love. As an object of intuition, they point to 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 of the impossibility of their evaluation.

Van Roy's works show us that we are no 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 demonstrates that something does not exist simply because it is the future possibility of a 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 envisions a coming condition that does not need to result from our present.

The things have already happened, like us.

Marcel Hiller