

Figure of Speech

Curated by ARTUNER

November 10, 2016 - January 14, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 10, 6-8 PM

Cassina Projects and ARTUNER are pleased to announce *Figure of Speech*, a new exhibition opening on November 10th, 2016 at Cassina Projects. This is the second chapter of a joint exhibition programme between the two ventures.

Figure of Speech is a three-person show featuring the work of David Czupryn, Georg Herold and Katja Seib. A 'figure of speech' is a rhetorical device that enriches text with complex layers of significance: it can be a specific arrangement or omission of words, a particular kind of repetition, or a departure from the words' literal meaning. Some of the most commonly used ones are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification. The use of such devices often refines text by means of bringing sentiments closer to the everyday, or conversely by elevating simple experiences. This exhibition looks at the practices of three contemporary German artists affiliated with the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Specifically, it explores the ways in which each of them articulates the characters within the different narratives weaved into their works. Indeed, in a way similar to the use of a figure of speech in verbal discourse, Czupryn, Herold and Seib evoke, through the protagonists of their paintings, a plethora of references and affects.

David Czupryn's investigations of nature and artificiality merge with uncannily human emotions in his works on canvas. Personal episodes and dark stories take the shape of disquieting anthropomorphic assemblages of plants and plastics, polymers and minerals. Not interested in a faithful reproduction of nature as such, Czupryn's alchemies mould the fantastic universes of his paintings in an illusionistic amalgamation of materials. Unlike the composite portraits by the 16th century Italian Master Giuseppe Archimboldo, upon closer inspection, Czupryn's components – executed with hyperrealist detail – reveal themselves as unreal, non-existent, and otherworldly. The concurrent presence and absence of his characters – unnerving wallflowers quietly observing the audience – allows the artist to explore the uncanny and the unconscious.

Georg Herold is one of the most important German artists of the 20th century, best known for his sculptures made from a variety of materials – from bricks, bottles, wooden laths and underwear to bronze – as well as, at the other end of the spectrum, his caviar paintings, made by painstakingly arranging and numbering thousands of the precious black eggs on canvas. In *Figure of Speech*, the artist presents both his monumental humanoid bronze sculptures and the signature caviar paintings. Herold is resolved to interpreting the world according to his own canons: instead of asking questions to others, he seeks to question phenomena directly. It is essential for him to keep as unbound as possible from existing associations. Indeed, the caviar paintings are an investigation into displaced materials, into luxury and mortality, created with a substance that is simultaneously precious and degradable. The sculptures, on the other hand, embody the struggle between the maker and his creation, between desire and wish-fulfillment.

Katja Seib's paintings delve into narrative emotions. They open like doors onto private scenes of tenderness, desire, sadness or reverie. Always somewhat mysterious, her works hold the promise of disclosing their secrets hidden in the details. They articulate ineffable feelings that are at once personal and universal. Often metaphorical, Seib's painterly stories reflect with self-irony on the human condition in its infinite declinations. For her body of work presented in New York, unlike the one preceding it, the artist looks towards current events from the world at large, rather than at personal experiences. However, by portraying friends and people she feels close to, Seib brings such occurrences closer to an intimate dimension. Some, like the death of the legendary musician Prince, are moments that blur the boundaries between public and private, as they touch us deeply, without concerning us directly.

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David Czupryn (b. 1983) is a German-born artist who lives and works in Düsseldorf. He graduated from the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie (2007–2015) where he studied sculpture under Georg Herold and painting under Lucy McKenzie and Tomma Abts. His work has been shown throughout Europe including Maschinen Haus, Essen, Kunstmuseum Solingen, Düsseldorf, Londonnewcastle Project Space and Marlborough Contemporary in London. He participated in two spotlight exhibitions in 2016 on ARTUNER. This year he won the 70th International Bergischer (Art Prize).

Georg Herold (b. 1947) was born in Jena, East Germany. He now lives and works in Cologne. Herold studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich (1974-1976) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg (1977-1978). He holds professorships in Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Düsseldorf. One of the most renowned German artists of the last thirty years, Herold has shown throughout Europe and the US since 1977. He has had solo and two person exhibitions at institutions such as at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Museum Brandhorst, München, the Kunstverein, Freiburg and at galleries such as Max Hetzler, Berlin, CFA, Berlin, Sadie Coles, London and The Modern Institute, Glasgow. His broad oeuvre, which covers sculpture, installation, photography, painting and video, has had a major influence on artists throughout Europe.

Katja Seib (b. 1989) was born in Düsseldorf, Germany where she lives and works. She received an MFA in painting and studied as a 'Meisterschüler' under Professor Tomma Abts. Her work has been exhibited in several German galleries including the KIT Museum in Düsseldorf, Parkhaus Düsseldorf Gallery, Fiebach Minninger Gallery, Cologne and Londonnewcastle Project Space in London. She took part in a 2016 spotlight exhibition on ARTUNER.

For press inquiries or further information, please contact Cassina Projects at info@cassinaprojects.com or +1 (212) 242-0444

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