21er RAUM: SIMON DYBBROE MØLLER
LETTUCE

21er Haus
5. December 2015 to 31 January 2016

Simon Dybbroe Møller
Exhibition view 21er Haus, 2015
Photo: © Belvedere, Vienna
Simon Simon Dybbroe Møller (born 1976) is currently Artist in Residence at the 21er Haus. His works focus on materiality and physicality against the backdrop of ubiquitous representations in the media and the simultaneous transformation of our concept of nature. In his exhibition in the 21er Raum, on show from 5 December 2015 to 31 January 2016, he displays a stuffed bird, a bronze sculpture, a kitchen unit, a printed marble slab, and something like lettuce leaves.

“Our current Artist in Residence Simon Dybbroe Møller is interfering with material, while at the same time he humorously comments on the current museal practice. This positions stands paradigmatically for the 21er Haus”, Agnes Husslein-Arco, director of the Belvedere and 21er Haus states.

The Belvedere’s Artist-in-Residence programme was launched in 2001, based at the apartment and studio established at Augarten Contemporary. International artists are invited to work in Vienna and to familiarize themselves and engage with the Austrian art scene.

To date the following artists have participated in the Artist-in-Residence programme: Jakob Kolding, Jonathan Monk, Róza El-Hassan, Ann-Sofi Sidén, Yoshitomo Nara, Hiroshi Sugito, Ugo Rondinone, Koo Jeong-A, Marcin Maciejowski, Silke Otto-Knapp, Julian Göthe, Gerard Byrne, Gülsün Karamustafa, Lucy McKenzie, Marianna Gartner, Christian Philipp Müller, Monika Schwitte, Ouyang Chun, David Maljković, Daniel Knorr, Michael Riedel, Seb Patane, Kiwon Hong, Jihye Park, Bernd Ribbeck, Sunghee Pae, Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Andy Coolquitt, Susanne Krieman and Adriana Lara.

Essay on the exhibition by Simon Dybbroe Møller

“We look at everything with photography. When we see a black piece of marble, often used in wet spaces and at memorial sites—bathrooms, kitchens, and graves—we notice its glossiness. It is so photographic. Look at its white veins, the snail shells, the mussels. See how it resembles a print made from a damaged negative. This is photography avant la lettre.

Of course, photography is different now. The growing breed of male tech enthusiasts posting online reviews of new camera equipment is inhabiting a complicated territory. In order to investigate and discuss the visual capabilities of the constant stream of new digital gear, they have to point their lenses towards something; they have to choose a motif. They mostly choose women or birds.

A cormorant drying its wings on an old withered wooden pole, for instance: the Jesus-like silhouette and the pride of its posture mirrored in the water surface. A truly
pathetic image. It is said that the cormorant is the most ancient bird around; that it
dates back to the dinosaurs. That unlike other aquatic birds it has not developed the oil
sheen that would protect it from becoming soaked, hence the crucifix-like pose: it does
so to dry its feathers in the breeze. What an anachronism. A more constructive voice
would frame it differently and explain how most creatures are naturally buoyant, but
how for diving birds this is an issue. The cormorant is thought to swallow pebbles to
increase its weight. Its main adaptation, though, is its open feather structure that does
not trap buoyancy-increasing air but absorbs water instead. Regardless: imagine
soaked feathers. Conversely imagine water droplets on a water-repellent surface. Let us
think about this in relation to analog and to digital image making.

Perhaps the wet white t-shirt was the climax of old-world sleaziness. A last spasm of
the analog before our descent into the weight- and age-less universe of silicone and
Botox, the taxidermy of the technosphere; into the waxed universe of the virtual. Do
you remember Sabrina and Boys Boys Boys? Can you recall Samantha Fox? The way
those singers exploited white cotton and water to produce images of their shapely
bodies both concealed and enhanced. Images that seemed to transcend the slick
surface of the glossy magazines by echoing the fluidity of analog processing and the
stickiness of the emulsion coat of a photographic print. Tits and ass or draperie
mouillée. A century earlier the realist Constantin Emile Meunier modeled his
monumental sculpture The Dock Worker, depicting the toned figure of his subject
draped in moist, clingy garments. In this fantasy even the soggy is solid, the saturated
is steely. The patina of the bronze reminiscent of a vintage sepia-toned black-and-white
print; the lack of tonality melting the body with the cloth.

It is surely no coincidence that perfectly contained drops of liquid sitting on surfaces of
things feature so heavily in digital image-making tutorials. Like the techy garments
used in the outdoor sports industry, these images inhabit a landscape of
impenetrability. We know that the perfect water drops on the bright green leaves
adorning our computer desktops did not occur naturally. That they were placed there,
then elaborately lit. Possibly they are not water at all but either gelatin or resin or pure
digital post-production. Even when sitting on an absorbent surface they do not soak
things; they do not evaporate into the air. We are dealing with digital image making
here, with ideals. No earth to earth, but a world where things have borders, a world
without entropy, a universe without decay. Like fresh lettuce lying on a minimalist
polished steel kitchen countertop—its white veins piercing through the neon green
translucence hue of its leaves, its objecthood amplified by the mirroring metal surface—
so low in calories that digesting it requires the same amount of energy as it contains."
Simon Dybbroe Møller (born 1976) grew up in Greenland and lives in Berlin. His works have been exhibited most recently at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, at the Musée d’Art Contemporain de la Ville de Paris, at the Kunsthau Glarus in Switzerland, and at Ludlow 38 in New York (all in 2015). Upcoming exhibitions of his works are hosted by Le Plateau in Paris, MOCA Cleveland, as well as the Kunsthalle São Paulo.

The 21er Raum

Located on the upper floor of the 21er Haus, this space within a space is architecturally distinct from the rest of the building, while at the same time it is part of the overall structure. Generally solo exhibitions are presented here at six-week intervals, although there are small group shows, too. The program focuses on the young and the contemporary by artists who live and work in Austria.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title
21er Raum:
Simon Dybbroe Møller – Lettuce

Duration

Venue
21er Raum

Artist
Simon Dybbroe Møller

Curator
Severin Dünser

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Opening hours
Wednesday and Thursday 11 am to 9 pm
Friday to Sunday 11 am to 6 pm
Open on public holidays

Regular entry
€ 7,- (21er Haus)
€ 21,- (21er Haus annual ticket)

Press
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Images for press are available for download under the following link: www.21erhaus.at/press
(Password: pr2015)