

BALICEHERTLING

SCHRANK UND DESSEN LEBEN, translated as 'The Lives of an Armoire', is Reto Pulfer's second solo show at Balice Hertling.

Reto Pulfer is a self-taught artist working with sculpture, performance, installation and sound. His work emerges from a "Zustand": something that is complete in itself but is stable just for a limited time. Pulling the viewer into a back-and-forth game, playing with authority and the use of mnemonics Pulfer is drawn to materials such as second hand fabrics, Raku ceramics and other organic materials. Interested in the construction of a linguistic system the artist defines some of the preliminary texts that generate his pieces as mnemonics, a reference to the ancient Greek technique for memorizing complex speeches or poems. In Pulfer's work it's neither the system dictating the form nor the arrangement of forms creating the system. It seems to operate in both directions: there is no transcendent meaning, only permanent transformation.

The exhibition is centred around a main installation and single three-dimensional wall pieces. An open armoire - surrounded by arrangements of textiles that seem to come alive and be expelled from within it - draws the viewer inside the exhibition space. This acts like an introduction to the show. The artist presents a story open to interpretation in which a clear relationship exists between the pivotal armoire and the elements that surround it. On its shelves are different objects: spices, raku-ceramics, fabrics and a can of fruit cocktail. Drawn to puns and the deconstruction of language, the artist plays with words and their meanings. Next to a cocktail can lies the actual tale of a rooster (a "cock tail"). Similarly on a piece of turquoise polyester velvet the artist wrote poly-Esther (the diverse Esther). The *fruit cocktail* is used by the artist to decipher a variety of the decisions reached within the exhibition, from the composition of the wall pieces and their seeming struggle between two and three-dimensionality, to the use of different materials: textiles, leather and garment pieces.

Moving through the wardrobe into the exhibition an installation of several wall sculptures is presented. Mounted on irregular shaped and three-dimensional wood frames these pieces are an ensemble of various materials such as pieces of worn clothes, ink stained fabrics, ribbons. Emulating the mixing of various elements within cocktails, Pulfer associates an array of contrasting materials and arrives at combinations accountable as metaphors. Each metaphor leads to another metaphor - a mix of spices, a wall piece of diverse textiles, a can of fruit cocktail or a complexly elaborated smell. They all create an underlining theme, or in this case an *atmosphere*, with multiple arrangements contributing to the Lives of the *Schrank*.

Reto Pulfer was born in 1981 in Bern and lives and works in Berlin. His solo exhibitions include "Die Kammern des Zustands", Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Rome (2011), "Die Vertretung des Erschöpfen", Istituto Svizzero di Milano, Milan (2011). His group exhibitions include "Wunder", Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2011), "Tableaux", CNAC Le Magasin, Grenoble (2011), "Animism", Kunsthalle Bern, Extra City Kunsthall and M HKA Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerpen (2010), "The Object of the Attack", David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2009), "modernmodern", Chelsea Art Museum, New York (2009).

Balice Hertling will present Reto Pulfer at the upcoming edition of Art Basel Statements in June 2012.

Pulfer's work was subject to a monographic catalogue published in 2010 by Archive Books.

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