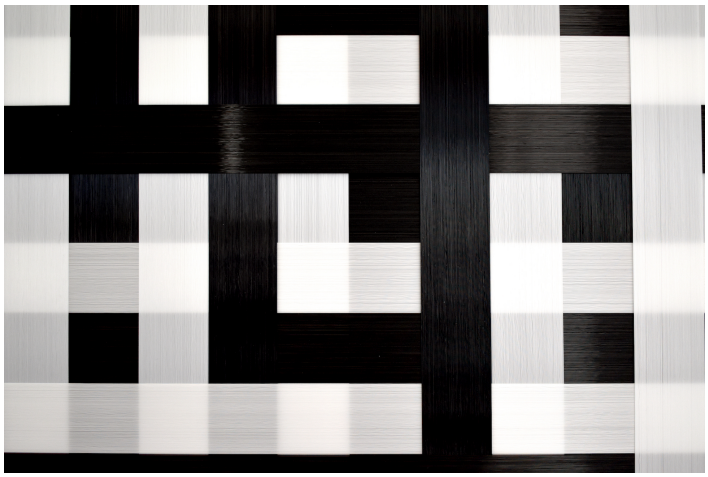
VAN DER GRINTEN GALERIE



Wolfgang Flad, Fernando de Brito, Joseph Beuys, Rikako Kawauchi, Rebecca Stevenson, Lorenzo Pompa, Elger Esser, Robert Currie

TRANSFORMATION: MATERIAL & DISSOLUTION

17.06.2023–05.08.2023

As the title of the show suggests, the focus here is on the alchemical aspect of art. This could perhaps be described as a recharging action, by which lifeless, inconspicuous material is reborn as something precious, fascinating, powerful and unique, and this element then remains purposely perceptible in the work. Perhaps to provoke wonder, a moment to stop and take up the scent that brings the viewer into active dialogue with the work and its aura.

The exhibition 'TRANSFORMATIONS: MATERIAL AND DISSOLUTION' brings together works of 11 international artists in which the transformation of materials plays a role, often a fundamental one. Here we encounter matter in the form of: dust, wax, paper, nylon,

epoxy, glass, mirrored glass, silver, ink, graphite and plaster.

Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) a major protagonist of the post-war avant-garde, Beuys is undisputedly among the most influential artists, whose understanding of material (also in the alchemical sense) went as far as the use of his own body. Here we present 6 very quiet, gentle frottage drawings that were made in the 50s in connection with his zinc relief „Vor der Geburt" (Before the Birth).

The three-dimensional works of Japanese painter **Rikako Kawauchi** (*1990, lives in Tokyo) are made of flesh-colored serpentine structures cast in resin. They evoke organic entities that despite their utter abstraction exude an extreme realism.

Artist **Wolfgang Flad** (*1974, lives in Berlin) is represented with pieces from various work groups: abstract aluminum reliefs with a stark interplay between the shiny polished surface and the rough, pockmarked texture of the craters that blemish it to various degrees; colorful, reflective wall pieces from his 'Dark Side of the Moon' cycle; and the latest works, large-format abstract tableaus with an uneven, sandy surface made of dust and sawdust collected from the floor of the artist's studio, color-enhanced and transformed.

From a photographic template transferred in painting onto a collection of numerous thin, taught nylon threads, densely spaced yet offsetting each other, artist **Robert Currie** (*1976, lives in London) creates three-dimensional wall pieces that are visually extremely suggestive while appearing almost immaterial at the same time. His abstract works, on the other hand, evoke shadowy black mirrors.

Elger Esser (*1967, lives in Düsseldorf) here shows two small-format nightscapes, in which the black silhouettes of treetops are seen in the moonlight, outlined against the night sky. The special technique of direct pigment printing on silver-plated copper plates palpably communicates the magical atmosphere, as the eye roams the scene of darkest night, seeking orientation and a sense of space in the few light sources to be found.

The black and white photographs of **Pierre Faure** (*1965, lives in Paris) have a surprising extreme-yet- subtle alienation effect: with a flipped perspective, a skillfully chosen image edit and reduction of visual information down to purely geometric structures the perception of

scaffolding is completely redefined.

Using more or less sharp objects, **Fernando de Brito** (*1956, lives in Hamburg), carves through the layers of oil and tempera built up on the MDF "canvas" to create paintings that are a mesh of lines. The principal of oscillation between clearly spaced straight vertical lines and freehand, dynamic horizontal lines seems to make each composition pulsate and allows it to breath.

Dutch artist **Bas de Wit** (*1977, lives in Maastricht) transforms casts of old art-historical sculptures, out of which he makes new, more rough-hewn castings, which he in turn then casts with colored layers of resin. This process leaves much room for deformation, by accident or design, resulting in newly created sculptures that are but a vague reminiscence of the original historical model, from which they have liberated themselves in stages, to assert their own existence in the end.

Wax, a flexible, user-friendly material, has been deployed widely throughout art history in the area of applied arts and for maquettes of planned sculptures. **Rebecca Stevenson** (*1971, lives in London), in contrast to the hyperrealism of the 60s or 90s, uses wax to sculpturally paraphrase the depiction of reality found in her poetic-macabre allegories.

The always intensely colorful figurative scenarios in the paintings of **Lorenzo Pompa** (*1962, lives in Düsseldorf) are joined at regular intervals, as if in an ongoing dialogue, by black-silver abstract works in which the oil paint is constrained in minimalistic gesture that depending on the size can become an almost unlimited textural field. This show presents the latest of these paintings.

Michael Wittassek (*1958, lives near Cologne), for his part, works mainly in the form of installation with sculptures of folded, crumpled sheets of exposed photographic paper. Here, however, we are showing mid-sized black, mirrored objects with a reflective convex surface that seems to suck in the surrounding space and even the viewers themselves.

We would like to thank the participating artists for their generous constructive input.