

Valentin Carron

Haus und Kropf

Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Vienna September 9 – October 25, 2023

Review by Giulia Colletti



At the core of Valentin Carron's practice lies a farcical paradox: his aversion towards certain objects fuels a meticulous dedication to recreating them in replicas.

This practice does not erase the original. It rather accentuates its intricate symbolism, raising questions about tradition and identity formation. Carron's roots in Valais, a Swiss region where traditions were woven in the late 19th century in a quest for national cultural identity, challenge the manufactured authenticity of the endemic Swiss Style. Carron's aesthetic melds mundane objects with vernacular symbols, resulting in an imaginary Switzerland that defies historical reality. His local milieu then becomes a conduit for an imaginative exercise that he puts forward by pushing the limits of canonical painting while fostering pasty techniques and round-shaped applications.

Daily items like a ping-pong paddle or a walking stick become transitional objects through which visitors can interact with the enamel-painted bronze hominids inhabiting the exhibition *Haus und Kropf* at Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Vienna. In this series, Carron casts the bronze into figures that appear fragile and instable in their components and postures. Conceived as an iteration of the series exploring the relationship between humans and dogs (*Baby and Dog*, 2022 or *Adult and Dog*, 2022), these sculptures exude a sense of vulnerability, reminiscent of the stylized yet textured executions by artists like Lin May Saeed in *Dach der Welt – The Liberation of Animals from their Cages X*, 2010 and Peter Fischli & David Weiss in *Animal*, 1986. Rather than focusing their attention on another living being, this time Carron's figures encapsulate a physical and psychological inwardness, seemingly disclosing a condition of solitude and delusions.

This state of unresolved isolation extends to the series of canvases *Haus und Hund 8*, 2023. Although Carron admits trying to steer away from painting, nonetheless he acknowledges a lifelong affinity for the medium by embarking on an exploration that seems to pay homage to the experimentations of Transavanguardia. The silhouettes of sit and wandering dogs in his paintings recalls Enzo Cucchi's uncanny pictorial scenes, such as *A Terra d'Uomo*, 1980, but also the sculptural impasse perceived in Domenico Palladino's *Montagna di Sale*, 1990.

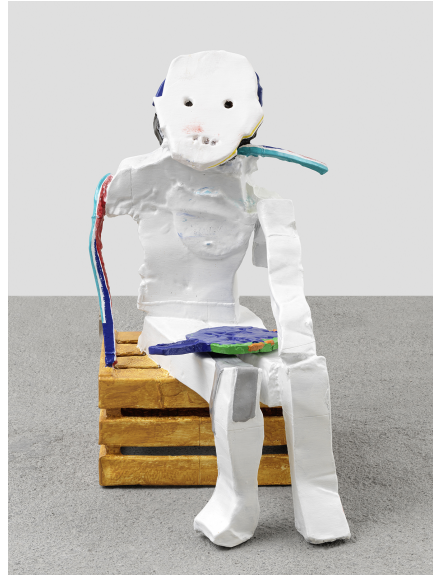
Touching on the relationships between living beings and environmental stimuli – which often entails divergent or abnormal responses – *Haus und Kropf* is an attempt to expand on interspecies companionship all the while accentuating the silent solitude that often shrouds our existence.

Installation view, Valentin Carron, *Haus und Kropf*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Vienna, 2023

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Photo: Jorit Aust



Installation view, Valentin Carron, Haus und Kropf, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Vienna, 2023

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