

SETAREH

Anton Alvarez & Cathrin Hoffmann
VIRGULA DIVINA

Friday, July 19, 2019
Opening Reception 7 pm
Hohe Straße 53, Düsseldorf
July 20 – August 31, 2019

SETAREH X Viva con Agua present the double exhibition VIRGULA DIVINA by Anton Alvarez and Cathrin Hoffmann.

Anton Alvarez concentrates on the development of systems, tools and processes for the production of objects. Under six thousand pounds of pressure, soft clay is pressed from a self-constructed extrusion machine into various shapes and brought into its final form by the artist's hand. Like traditional ceramics, Alvarez's clay sculptures are hardened and glazed in a furnace.

Alvarez also uses this extrusion process to form soft wax before letting it solidify in a cold water basin. He then has some of the wax sculptures cast into bronze by lost-wax casting, just like traditional bronze sculptures.

The architecture of the sculptures consists of an interaction between control and chance. The sculptor makes this clear by revealing the production process in the exhibition space, often exhibiting his machines and their derivatives side by side as sculptures with equal rights. With this process, he refers both to the products and to the artistic-machine manufacturing process. "I like an object that tells a rather transparent story," Alvarez notes, referring to the processuality of his works.

The Swedish-Chilean artist, who lives in Stockholm, graduated from the Royal College of Art in London in 2012. Alvarez studied carpentry before taking a course in interior design and furniture design at the Konstfack Art College in Stockholm. Alvarez's work has been exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Salon94 in New York and the Xue Xue Institute in Taipei. His works are represented in the collections of the Swedish National Museum and the Röhsska Museum in Gothenburg.

Cathrin Hoffmann creates exciting and at the same time confounding works with a revealing view of human existence in the process of becoming and decaying. With a surreal appearance, one encounters fabulous beings whose bright pink and red surfaces are reminiscent of the strange skeletons of open bodies. The artist has depicted her figures against a monochrome background and staged them as if in a photography studio. The works seem to have been produced digitally, as the textures and forms in the oil and acrylic paintings have been carefully worked out.

In fact, Hoffmann first creates the portraits with image processing programs and then reproduces the relief-like surfaces with their seemingly smooth, polished colour gradients with paint on the canvas. Colour gradients, straight lines in alignment and surfaces interpreted in perspective are combined to form three-dimensional, figurative forms underpinned by a strong cast of shadows. The haptic patina and individual brush hairs, which remain stuck in the paint, have a charming effect. It is the ambivalence between the perfect, flawless appearance of a digital image and the reproduction of human hands that comes to bear here. The artistic process of creation takes place intuitively and liberatingly, leading to figures that appear anonymous and exhibit a peculiar flatness in their surface dynamics.

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In the interplay of various painterly surface phenomena and with an affinity for absurdity and grotesqueness, Hoffmann treats the theme of human existence in an aesthetic confrontation. Her ambivalence is part of Hoffmann's figures: "The tension between beauty and disgust or humour and melancholy offers an incredible dynamic that I find particularly fascinating," says Hoffmann. On long journeys in Africa and Latin America, the artist collected many impressions that have found their way into her works. Hoffmann invites us to reflect on current concepts and ideals of beauty as well as on the relationship between man and machine.

The long and complex transformation of culture from analogue to digital media is regarded by the artist as the most significant change of her generation. She demonstrates how digitality permeates all forms of visual expression in "post-analogue" art and how the incorporation of current graphic and digital means can further develop artistic practice.

Cathrin Hoffmann lives and works in Hamburg. She uses a clear graphic visual language which was also influenced by her studies of communication design. Hoffmann's paintings were most recently shown in the exhibition "End of Residency" at PLOP London, an initiative of the artist Oli Epp. In April this year, she also took part in the exhibition POST ANALOG STUDIO organized by the New York gallery The Hole.

In the first cooperation: SETAREH X Viva con Agua, part of the proceeds from the sale of the exhibition will go to drinking water and sanitation projects by Viva con Agua. #artcreateswater