

John Ahearn, Elizabeth Jaeger, Tony Matelli, Lionel Maunz, Kris Lemsalu, Adam Ulbert, Francis Upritchard, and Cajs von Zeipel

pər-ˈsō-nae

curated by Anna Lalla

November 17, 2017 – Januar 13, 2018

The group show **pər-ˈsō-nae** reflects on the aspects and perspectives of figurative contemporary sculpture. We live in ambivalent times in regard to the 'bodily' – on the one hand we are experiencing a constant drift into the digital/virtual that encompasses all areas of life; on the other hand there is at once an increase in this longing for 'real-ness', tangibility and sensation that almost takes a manic streak. Sculpture responds to our desire for the physical as it gives a form to reality and negotiates concrete topics by means of their literal corporeality. It raises questions of identity, relationship structure, the perception of experience and space. Hyper-reality and the delimitation of the body can be as well in focus as biopolitics, consumption, pop culture, digitalism and the personal localization within these structures. We have invited artists that elaborate on their artistic practice in a particular and complex manner with aspects of the figurative and that have developed an authentic and distinct artistic language of expression.

John Ahearn's most notable work centers on creating life-cast portraits of members of the New York community. For decades Ahearn monumentalizes everyday people, in giving them a certain immortality. He casts sculptural forms using live models – mostly people from the communities and neighborhoods in which the artist worked and traveled. Ahearn captures people in all their self-possessed and artful individual non-homogeneity, with our multitude of languages, accents, trades, styles, opinions, attitudes, and dreams and shares them through the form of sculpture.

John Ahearn (b. 1951, Binghamton, NY) studied at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. He now lives and works in New York City. Previous solo exhibitions include 'John Ahearn / Rigoberto Torres', Alexander and Bonin, New York; 'Delancey's Street', James Fuentes, New York; and 'Automatic for the People: John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres', Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art, Newark. Ahearn's work has been included in group exhibitions at the New Museum of Contemporary Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Bronx Museum of the Arts; and 'Greater New York' at MoMA PS1, New York.

Elizabeth Jaeger is a skilled ceramist and is known for her figurative sculptures of deformed human bodies with dolled-up faces, greyhound dogs, vases, and tableware. Seemingly familiar, they disclose a complex story of phenomenological concern. There is a sense of unease and uncanniness embed in her works that manipulate the traditional relationship between the viewers and their own physicality, their surrounding and their consciousness.

Elizabeth Jaeger (b. 1988 lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) studied at Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR and at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts, Nancy, France. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include 'Pommel and Six-Thirty', Jack Hanley Gallery; '8.30', And Now in Dallas, TX and 'Music Stand' Eli Ping, New York. The artist has participated in numerous group exhibitions including 'Mirror Cells' at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Moma PS1's Greater New York and 'In Practice: Fantasy Can Invent Nothing New' at Sculpture Center, New York.

Tony Matelli's hyperreal practice examines the human condition in a way that leaves no one partial. His work concerns the very circumstance of actuality, joining the ordinary with the speculative in order to assess cultural worth: what people keep or abandon, what appears to be in or out of place, and what seems pleasing or distasteful. Matelli's work expresses excess, neglect, decomposition, and regeneration, the upturned and the adrift, the romantic and the surreal.

Tony Matelli's (b. 1971 in Chicago, IL; lives and works in New York) work has been subject of solo-exhibitions a.o. at Marlborough Contemporary, London, United Kingdom (2017); The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (2016); Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden (2012); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2011); and Leo Koenig Inc, New York. Furthermore his works was part of numerous group exhibition including 'No Place Like Home', The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel; 'Wanderlust', The High Line, New York; 'Reshaping Reality. 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Sculpture', Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao, Spain; 'Personal Structures', curated by Karlyn De Jongh and Sarah Gold, 54th International Venice Biennale: ILLUMInations, Palazzo Bembo, Venice, Italy.

Lionel Maunz is known for his dystopian sculptures from brutal materials like cast iron, steel, and concrete. The artist depicts fragmented, deformed or dismembered body parts that appear both delicate and raw, poignant and disturbing. Maunz intertwines the elements of classical art, architectural sculpture and abstracted aspects of his own past to develop an emotional and yet structured aesthetic with a touch of almost classical sensibility.

Lionel Maunz (b. 1976 in Washington, DC; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) received his MFA at the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include 'Discovery of Honey / Work of the Family', The Contemporary Austin, Austin, TX and 'Deluge', Bureau, New York, NY. Maunz's work has been included in group exhibitions at a.o. Brennan & Griffin, New York, NY; Cantacuzino Palace, Bucharest, Romania; Contemporary Artists Center, Troy, NY and MoMA PS1, New York, NY.

Kris Lemsalu often experiments with traditional techniques to create her quirky works. Her works are multilayered and comprise a multitude of materials – from a delicate closing object made of glass and porcelain to animal body parts, plastic and raw natural objects like wood, stones, leather or animal pelts. Both humorous and fragile, dark and drawing, Lemsalu's work provides a powerful antidote to the cynicism by means of (self) irony.

Kris Lemsalu (b. 1985) is an artist based in Tallinn and Berlin. She has studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn, Danmarks Designskole in Copenhagen, and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Lemsalu has shown widely both in Estonia and abroad. Her recent and upcoming solo and duo exhibitions include: Upcoming solo exhibition at Komplot, Brussels (2017); CONDO collaborative exhibition, 'Lord, Got To Keep On Groovin', Temnikova & Kasela gallery, Tallinn, Estonia; 'Afternoon Tear Drinker', curated by Hemma Schmutz, Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt (2016). Her work has been subject of group-exhibitions a.o. Galeria Nicodim Bucharest, Romania; Tanya Leighton, Berlin, Germany; Haus Mödrath – Räume für Kunst, Kerpen, Germany; Kunstraum Niederösterreich, Vienna, Austria.

Adam Ulbert is fascinated by the concept propagated by science fiction writer J.G. Ballard that the history of evolution can be read in our bodies 'building materials. Evolution started with invertebrates and every vertebra in our spine marks the next stage in history. Going back in time, we reach a point at which the species are one. Your body is thus fundamentally linked to other living entities. In sculptures, Ulbert transports his source material to the domain of his imagination.

Adam Ulbert (b. 1984, Budapest, Hungary) is currently finishing his residency at Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Recent exhibitions include 'Thalassa I. / subliminal intruder', Karlin Studios, Prague, The Czech Republic; 'Figura Complexus', Trafó Gallery, Budapest, HU; 'Contemporary Hungarian Painting', Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, HU; 'Haunting monumentality', Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Zagreb, HR.

The works by **Francis Upritchard** are animated by mystery. Exquisitely imagined and startlingly strange, her sculptures reverberate with possible histories, both ancient and imagined. Upritchard's work has always been rife with allusions to other times, places, and cultures. Upritchard's recent works—larger figures on metal stands—continue to scramble ethnic and cultural stereotypes, but remain impossible to pigeonhole. Upritchard neither ridicules her subjects nor takes them so seriously. Her references linger beguilingly out of reach.

Francis Upritchard (b. 1976 in New Zealand, lives and works in London) major exhibitions include 'Viva Arte Viva', Curated by Christine Macel, The 57th Venice Biennale, Italy, 2017, 'Jealous Saboteurs', Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), Melbourne, Australia, 2016, 'In die Höhle', Secession, Vienna, Italy, 2010, 'Save Yourself', 53rd Venice Biennale – New Zealand national representation, 2009. Her work has been subject of solo exhibitions a.o. City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand; Anton Kern Gallery, NY, US; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, US; Kate MacGarry, London, UK; Amersfoort Kunsthall, The Netherlands.

Cajsa von Zeipel's work is about identity and forming a sense of self. Familiar and yet distant, von Zeipel's sculptures of young women and men are both fascinating and frightening. At first glance, they seem vulnerable and weak, with their beautifully shaped bodies, kinky dresses, and wide, woeful eyes. But the closer we get, the stronger you feel their integrity and intimidation. They are not ours to look at, to sexualize and domesticate, control or condemn. Renouncing our sympathies and our voyeuristic gaze, they reverse the relation between the spectator and the object.

Cajsa von Zeipel (b. 1983 in Gothenburg, Sweden) has studied at Royal University College of Fine Arts, Stockholm, Sweden and Städelschule, Frankfurt, Germany. She has held solo exhibitions at Company Gallery, New York, US; Arcadia Missa, London, United Kingdom; Andrehn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden; Växjö konsthall, Växjö, Sweden. Moreover her work was featured at Mitchell Alpus Gallery, New York, US; Sven Harrys konstmuseum, Stockholm, Sweden; Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin, Germany; Bomuldsfabriken Kunsthall, Arendal, Norway; Kunsthalle Andratx, Mallorca, Spain.