

## On Anna Fasshauer

If there's anything the last quarter century has made evident for art, it's that objecthood was never a subject that could be left behind. Where one might say that theoretical discourse on the subject certainly waned in the last decade before the new millennium, it's become pertinent today to recognize the role novel interpretations of the object are having on contemporary art practices. And perhaps as a result of such an abundance of novel theory, the art object remains as inexhaustible and baffling as ever. Sourced from such a wellspring, Anna Fasshauer's work included in this catalog readily seeks yet another elucidation of objectmaking.

In early 2014, construction began in the open lot next to Fasshauer's Berlin studio. Like many construction sites in Berlin and other metropolises, large dumpsters were brought in that, as Fasshauer watched, slowly began to accumulate the leftover bits used in fast and ready construction. Crumpled aluminum air vents, sheets, and aluminum studs were thrown in, mashed further every day by new material. Discarded and estranged from their intended use, the pieces took on accidentally aesthetic forms. Seeing this day after day, Fasshauer soon began to sculpt a new body of work—a series of sculptures that would describe the *crashness* she saw in the construction site dumpster.

Bending, crushing, folding, winding, and welding, the works each began to take shape by Fasshauer's hand. They were defined in part by the moment in which they were made, and in part by the organic aesthetic evolution of the preceding works. Each new work was another figure adding its own expression to the growing phylum. The construction site lent Fasshauer a homogeneity of material, delimiting the work to simple extruded construction metal.

Fasshauer found titles for these works in a number of places, but drew from one source in particular. After the progenitive works that were given the constructionist title of *Bauprofil*, Fasshauer began giving a litany of conceptually-laden names to the works. Many were titled after French multi-national corporations that appear on the DAX. Fasshauer thought the personality of each name and the fluidity of a stock market index in relation to the elegance of each sculptural form seemed so apt—each an elusive golem figure wielding greater unknown influence.

For example, there's the towering two-toned grey *Cap Gemini* (all works 2015) named after the global consulting corporation. Most befitting perhaps is *Saint Gobain*, named after one of France's most historic manufacturers of building materials. Each work giving a material form to the contested corporate individuality the name represents. These literal captains of industry find themselves sharing space with the few works bearing peculiar, but complementary titles. There's *Kid Dynamite*, named after Mike Tyson, and *Tony Tucker*, another famed eighties heavyweight champ, and oddly *Don Tyson* assumedly refers to the former CEO of Tyson Foods, who died in 2011 as one of the richest men in the world.

On the surface, Fasshauer's work surely brings to the fore questions about the nature of progress, and the haphazard way we tumble, desiring and constructing our ways to move forward. Although, at a greater depth and sourced in aesthetic theory, is how Fasshauer's work finds itself proffering a new sense of the figurative.

Fasshauer's work is figurative in two competing senses. First, in the traditional corporal sense that many of the works stand as if they were living players on a stage, but in a greater sense that the works, taken as one, figure or model a network of exchanges. Pushing against each other in the space of their exhibition, the works

amass figuration, describing not just the construction site itself, but the distant exchanges that condition its making, presenting a steely auto-reproductive system that evolves of its own accord. This sense of figuration relates directly to contemporary theories that attest to the agency of objects. Despite the human hubris that suggests through an exceptional free-will possessed by no others, we are the sole managers and stewards of all, objects too are profound agents whose actions are equal to our own in shaping this world. The exhibition of these works, their spatial interactions, suggest that their aesthetic relations are representative of concrete actions.

A mock series of tensions is acted out that prefigures the existence of a banal construction site like the one that prompted this body of work. Fasshauer pits the ontogenesis of each of her individual works against the ever-growing machinic genealogy that is each individual series and her practice at large. In each new work, she negotiates their self-similarity, their mimicry of one another, and each opened potential trajectory. The occasional works that are painted matte, like *Fortuni* (2015) or *Psi* (2015), reduce the works' surfaces to suggest not just what is happening beneath the surface of each work, but also what is occurring between them. The inevitable comparison begs a question that while long resolved in hard science still has gravity when interpreting art. Namely, do the individual works form and condition the whole series or genre, or is it the operation of the system as a whole that figures each individual work? It's an ouroboros of a question. Fasshauer's work does not seek to answer it, but rather to activate its latent possibilities. Each work is a purposeful, powerful gesture mirroring the unsustainable speed and chaos of the built world around us.

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