

"I found these weird objects in this vessel..."

A persistent theme in the unfolding of new forms of object art within postmodernism is the continued investigation of the character of objecthood itself. In his 1965 text "Specific Objects," Donald Judd introduced a now celebrated rupture in the conceptual history of this inquiry, declaring sculpture dead and inaugurating the era (now equally moribund) of the three-dimensional object. Saliently, in this same gesture Judd likewise lay claim to the direct access of practicing artists to the means of critical-theoretical production.

It is perhaps this second legacy that is felt most powerfully in, [REDACTED], which is also still marked by concerns about the foundational status of objects. Rejecting the robustly anti-metaphysical legacy of post - Heideggerian phenomenology, [REDACTED] based [REDACTED], along with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and entering instead into a spectrum of object-oriented ontological discourses ranging from the older, quasi-mathematical "materialism" of Badiou, to the speculative realism/materialism of Brassier and Meillassoux, respectively, to the more recent hyperobjects of Timothy Morton.

Within the frame of the space, the form of investigation for the artists consisted of a series of stele-like structures of layered panels of styrofoam, into which both abstractly patterned and roughly representational carvings have been densely scored. The primary use of polystyrene, a petroleum-based, non-renewable plastic of significant concern to environmental groups and subject to a variety of partial bans worldwide, immediately instantiates questions of ecology in relation to the medium. As future relics from the late Anthropocene, the objects appear both poised to survive it and implicated in its excesses of unsustainable consumption. This suggests a certain complex dialectical relation to the age whose moment of emergency and crisis it appears to post-date; it is at once, implicitly, a critique of use-consumption and a tenuous example of it.

Covering the surfaces of the styrofoam steles, the etchings form a visual language, which intensifies the structural evocation of fragility, remoteness, improbable longevity and even a certain exoticism. Particularly in this last element, they necessarily invoke comparison to the "primitivist" investigations of the historical avant-garde, similarly employed in conjunction with a diverse array of critical conceptual frameworks at a moment of world-historical calamity. A resonance of this kind after nearly a century's passing implies a dissenting stance vis-à-vis the more well-known postcolonial politics of race, from which point of view the invocation of indigenous imagery or Hindu divinity by white European artists of the 21st-century would be unthinkable, and reflects instead perhaps an embrace of the more universalising orientation of object-oriented ontology. Quite unlike the infinitary set-theoretic abstractions of Badiou or Morton's hyperobjects of expansive spatio-temporal dimension, however, the artists possess a reassuringly human scale, intimations of intimacy even.

Their highly qualified humanism represents a vision of survival that is at once alien and familiar, domestic and anthropological. They see with their eyes, and ours.

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HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY
MOTOR SHIP HEIMATLAND
CLOSE TO FISHERINSEL 3
10 179 BERLIN
+49 1525 7486496
INFO@HOSEKCONTEMPORARY.COM
WWW.HOSEKCONTEMPORARY.COM

"When a private satellite encounters an unidentified source of heat in Antarctica and it is found to be an interdimensional vessel buried deep underground, a search team comprising of leading curators and critics is sent out to explore and contextualise. Once there, the team comes across weird artefacts, which indicate that the place is inhabited by an unknown humanoid-like hybrid species. It is not long before the hybrids begin to hunt and brainwash the team members. At the same time, a trio of overhyped Predators has arrived to prey on the art and collect the skulls of the hybrids as trophies. The human experts find themselves trapped in the middle of a deadly battle between the two weird species. The only thing that has survived the raging extraterrestrial annihilation is this fragment of research paper written by one of the human fellows, discovered years later, buried under his melted flesh and bones."

Kazimir Yusufovich