

CHRISTOPH ZELLWEGER

Domesticated

13 January to 13 February 2016

Fitness facilities for all ages have become familiar sites in many urban public spaces and in the home. Lines between public and private spheres, between work environment, living room and home office have become blurred. In *Domesticated*, Christoph Zellweger presents an original body of work that reflects on omnipresent social engagement in practices of self-improvement and control.

Through furniture-scale objects specifically designed to encourage interaction, Zellweger scrutinises inherent everyday experiences that individuals perform in order to deal with acceptance, fears and desires. These practices discipline our bodies and domesticate our existence. In these acts of identification we find fusion between people and their material belongings, objects as extensions of the self.

The *Workout and Domestic Confrontation* series offers puzzling encounters that invite the audience to lean, crouch, sit, swing, touch, hold, shake. Zellweger points at the troubling beauty and purpose of these disciplining objects, which to him exist as promises for a healthier and longer life, to become 'better' - in the way that workout equipment has replaced domestic shrines and altars in the corners of people's homes. The swing is an archetypal object that is associated with innocence and pleasure. Zellweger has equipped it with a spirit level that now ridicules the object's singular purpose and denies benign pleasure. The inflation of sensorial devices around us, measuring how we perform and how we use equipment and our homes, challenges and alters behaviour - reframing our relationship with the exhibited objects; robot (what can it do), mirror (what does it do), antlers (what does it want).

This obsession with the normalisation and rejuvenation of the self is further explored in *Cabinet of Norms and Choices*. This work cannot be ignored, in such a playful space it stands out as a more intimate and interactive piece. The act of opening the cabinet doors and the sudden realisation of what the handles represent may give the viewer pause, however the artist invites us to continue and become comfortable with the work. Visitors are encouraged to hold the double-sided tablets and take in all angles of these surprising and familiar forms. Through the rise in popularity of plastic surgery, the labiaplasty in particular is becoming increasingly common procedure, and as such - the ongoing creation of a homogenous aesthetic. Here we are given individuality in detail, the full spectrum of what beauty is. There is an act of seeing and looking, which is enjoyment and examination.

Domesticated sees Zellweger reflecting on the high expectations, desires and obligations that such practices and objects evoke. The imposed duty of life-long commitment to self-improvement and design, typical of material-driven societies is here put under scrutiny, with both humoristic and critical undertones. The artist confronts the viewer, highlights our complacency in conforming to these social norms and invites us to rethink.

Visitors are encouraged to interact with the objects in the exhibition, and to upload photos and videos to social media. Please hashtag #MarsdenWooGallery and #CZDomesticated

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