

Alexander Heim

Galerie Karin Guenther
Admiralitätstraße 71
20459 Hamburg
+49 (0)40 37503450

www.galerie-karin-guenther.de



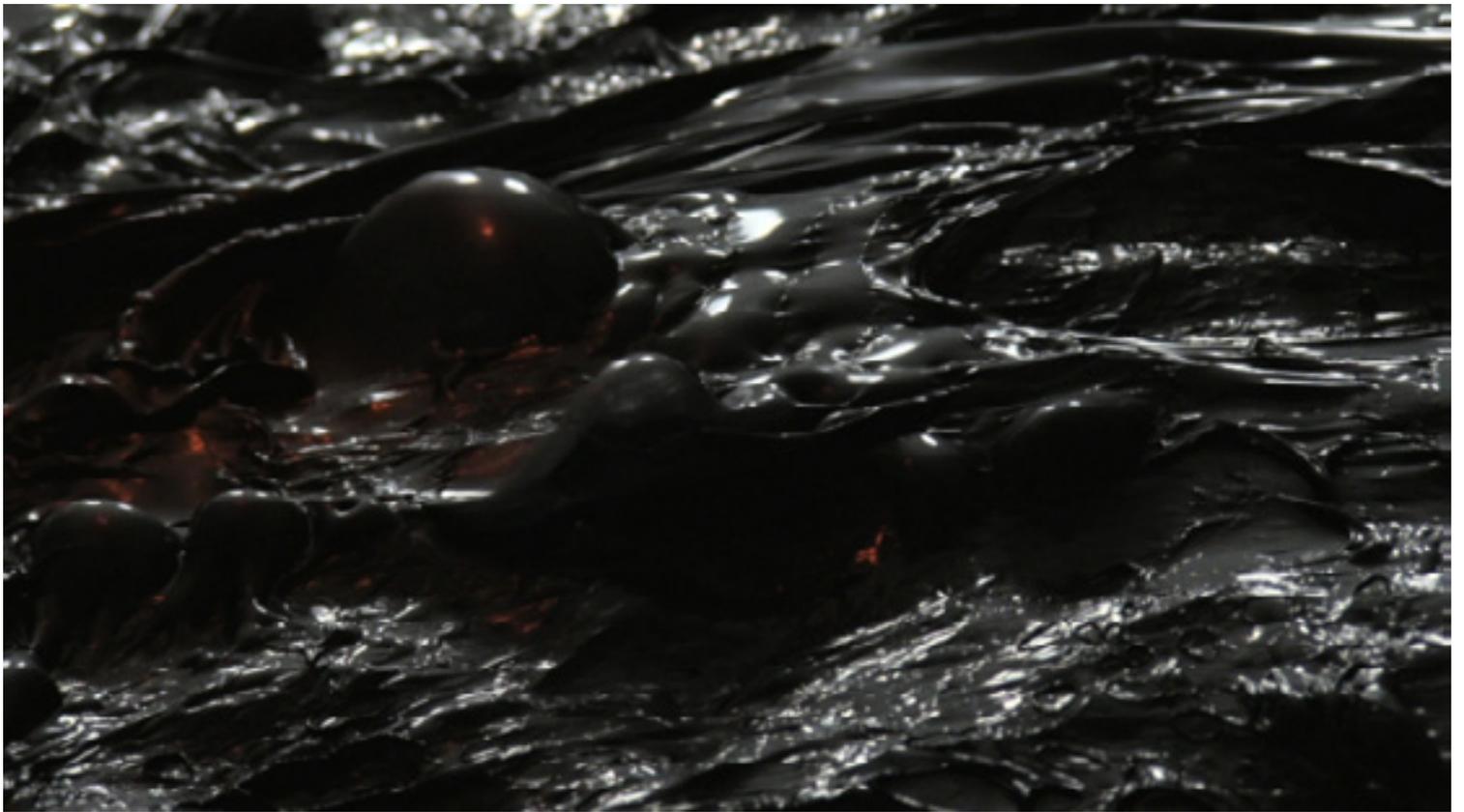
Alexander Heim
Blue Planet 2.1.5, 2018
Cast concrete & polyester resin, 40 x 50 x 4 cm



Alexander Heim
Blue Planet 2.1.8, 2018
Cast concrete & polyester resin, 40 x 50 x 4 cm



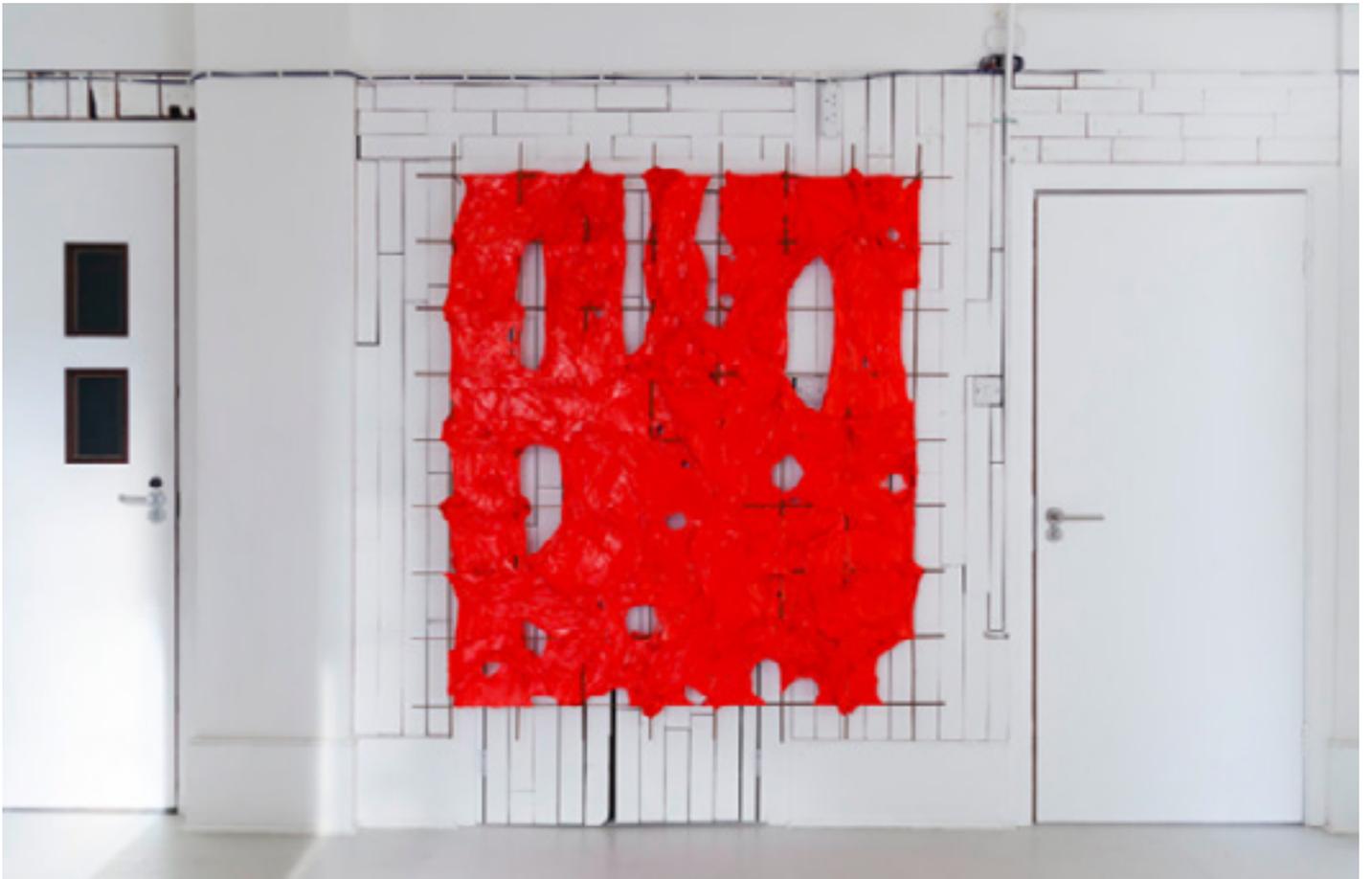
Alexander Heim
Blue Planet 2.1.10, 2018
Cast concrete & polyester resin, 40 x 50 x 4 cm



Alexander Heim
Making of Several Polymer Nebulae, 2018
Video invite



Alexander Heim
Several Polymer Nebulae, 2018
Installation view, Flat Two, London



Alexander Heim
Several Polymer Nebulae, 2018
Installation view, Flat Two, London



Alexander Heim
Polymer Nebula Six, 2018
Molten plastic bags, steel mesh, 160 x 180 x 15 cm

Alexander Heim
Several Polymer Nebulae

With the sixth mass extinction event in the geological history of our planet being well under way, scientists and researchers are coming up with new words to describe this transitional era. The Anthropocene is being considered as one, the human era. Or perhaps the Capitalocene, others suggest, would be more appropriate, as it takes into account the driving force behind the perpetrating creature; after all, not every human is a venture capitalist.

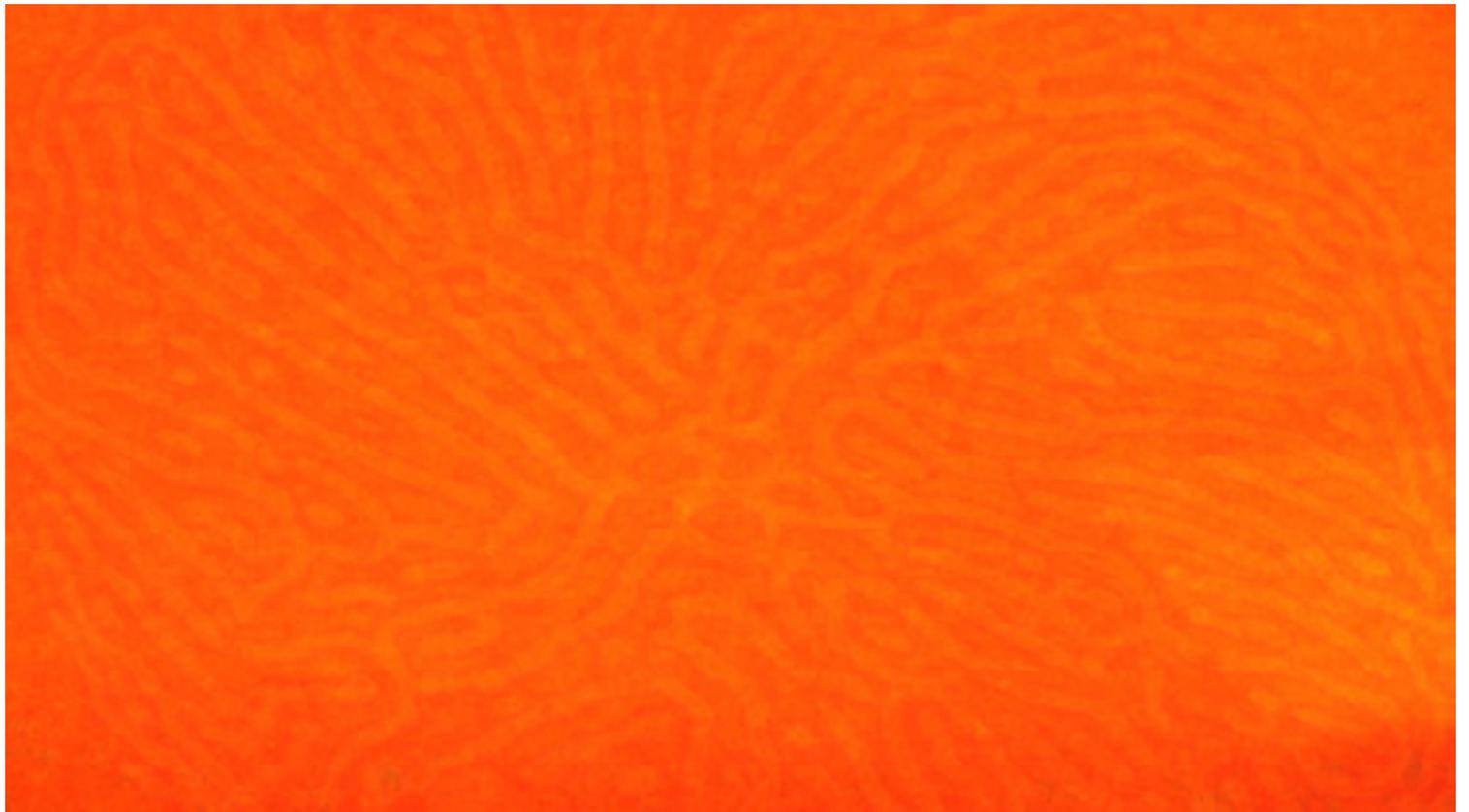
Donna Haraway is a Distinguished Professor Emerita in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Her work explores the string figures composed by speculative feminism, speculative fabulation, science fiction and science fact.

In her 2016 book 'Staying With The Trouble' she conceived in response to the above mentioned Anthropocene/Capitalocene the term Chthulucene, describing an era that includes the past, present and future. Haraway's concept of the Chthulucene urges for global recuperation by advocating tentacular 'thinking-with', a revolutionary world view that acknowledges and celebrates inter-species dependencies. Or as she calls it, sympoesis, making-with as opposed to autopoiesis, self-making:

"If it is true that neither biology nor philosophy any longer supports the notion of independent organisms in environments, ... then sympoesis is the name of the game in spades. Bounded (or neoliberal) individualism amended by autopoiesis is not good enough figurally or scientifically; it misleads us down deadly paths."

From this view point, perceiving raw matter – or every-day materials – as something dead or non-living, is not an option. The amorphous, mucoid shapes stretched over the steel grids in this exhibition are made from plastic carrier bags, transformed by heat. We like to think of plastic as something artificial; but objects such as plastic carrier bags are obviously alive and in flux, just as the people carrying them around, or the vegetables wrapped in them, or everything else in the world.

The very creation of the concept Nature as something external, and with it the wish to save the planet, is actually part of the dilemma: Our inability to comprehend or perceive reality unfiltered; to see ourselves as separate individuals and not part of the same organism with all other so-called 'things'.



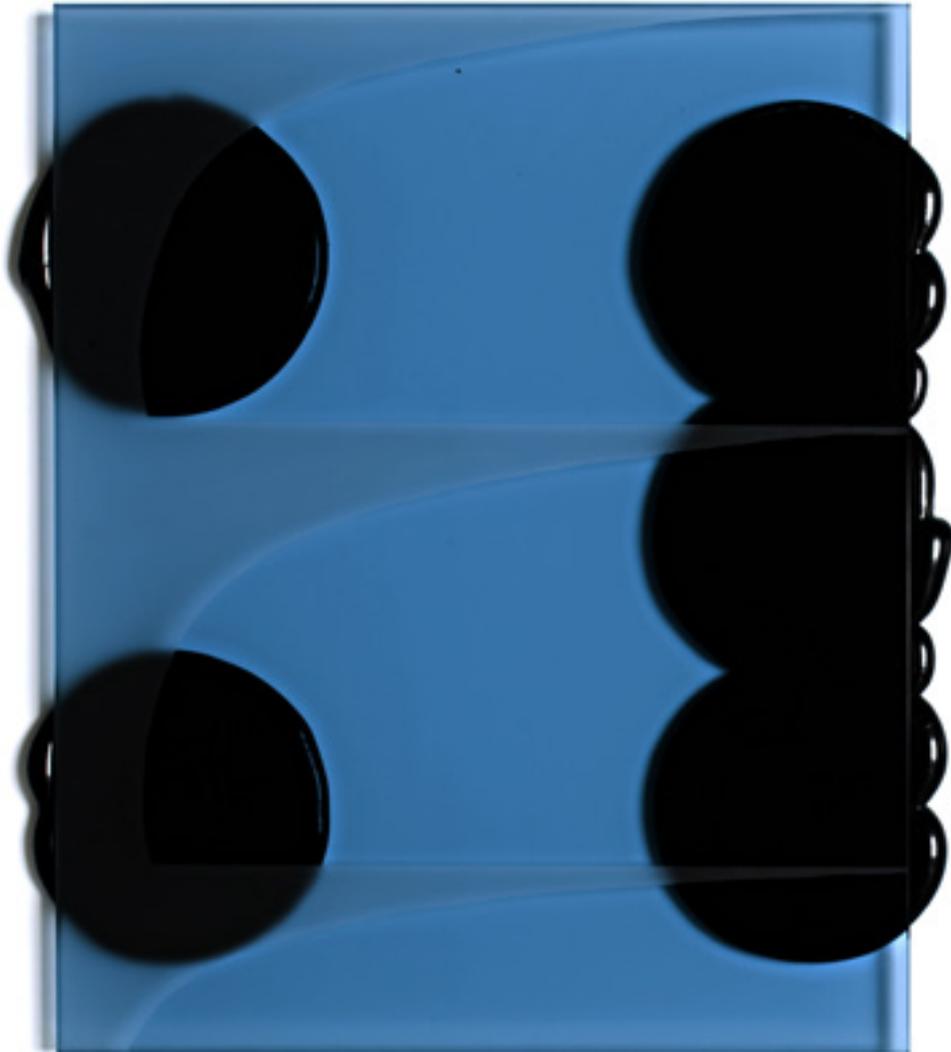
Alexander Heim
14355_16_23_05.rts, 2016
Video still, seamless video loop with sound 33:03 min, dimensions variable



Alexander Heim
Local Bubbles
Installation view, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg 2016



Alexander Heim
Local Bubble No 12, 2015
Glass, silicone, 50 x 40 x 2 cm



Alexander Heim
Local Bubble No 5, 2014
Glass, silicone, 50 x 40 x 2 cm

Alexander Heim
Local Bubble

Karin Guenther is pleased to announce Alexander Heim's third solo show with the Gallery exhibiting a new series of works titled 'Local Bubbles' (2015).

For this series Heim deposits large lumps of silicone sealant behind industrial sheets of polished glass. The lumps of silicone are squashed and expand towards the glass' edges in the process. Bonding to the glass, the silicone also acts as a carrier; the glass is seemingly floating in space, as if merely stuck to the wall by the lumps of glue. Some of the glass sheets have an additional layer on the front: Patterns and shapes are etched into the glass using acid, frosting the otherwise polished surface and thus giving the piece texture and stressing its three-dimensional aspect.

Mixed with the 'Local Bubbles' are two more relief sculptures from a previous series called 'Knight Without Title (Fired)' (2013-16), which Heim re-worked for this exhibition. The previously wooden panels were burnt to charcoal with a blowtorch, rendering them pitch black, much like the black lumps of silicone behind the glass. Rather than painting the wood black, the material is actually transformed to a state in which it has become black. The overall outline of each 'Knight' is derived from a kind of jig saw puzzle: Three panels are cut into two pieces each by following a curved line, creating in a positive and a negative shape. The resulting six shapes are then arranged to a composition, which forms the 'Knights' character. 'Knight Without Title (Fired)' refers to two scrupulous British bankers, who, in the wake of the recent financial crisis, had their 'Sir' titles stripped by Her Majesty the Queen.

Heim is interested in the process of a body's expansion into space. In the case of the 'Local Bubbles', pressure applied to the glass, forces the silicone to expand into the available space between glass and wall. The outline of the resulting shape can be planned, but not controlled. An element of chance is invited into the equation, something Heim has often been drawn to in his approach. Early works by Heim include ready-made found objects, and the notion of 'finding a shape', if not on the street, but nowadays in the studio, has prevailed as a fundamental part of his practice.

'Heim's work cuts loose traditional hierarchical bonds, which unite art objects with those of mass cultural decent in an authoritarian relationship. Art here starts outside its own realm, more precisely even outside that of what is traditionally named as culture. Heim expands the concept of culture fundamentally, in starting from an actualised understanding of its other - nature.' Kerstin Stakemeier (2011)

As previously observed by Stakemeier in the context of another exhibition, so draws the series 'Local Bubbles' inspiration from ideas associated with natural sciences. The title 'Local Bubble' refers to a term used in astronomy, which describes the larger context, in which our solar system is thought to be located within the universe.



Alexander Heim
Knight Without Title No 7&8 (Fired), 2016
Charred Wood, 108 x 85 x 4 cm / 110 x 67 x 4 cm



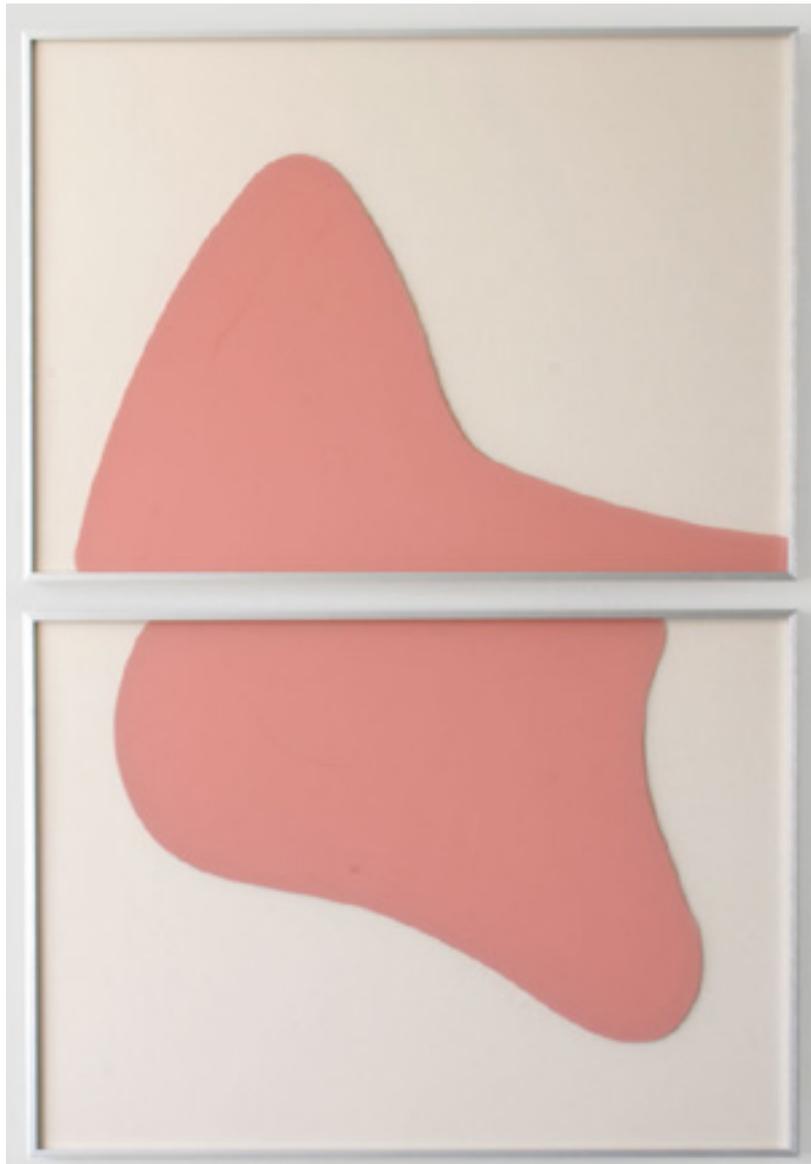
Alexander Heim
Unlikely Liaison, 2014
Installation view



Alexander Heim
Unlikely Liaison, 2014
Glue on perspex and board, 103 x 70 cm (2 parts)



Alexander Heim
Unlikely Liaison, 2014
Glue on perspex and board, 103 x 70 cm (2 parts)



Alexander Heim
Unlikely Liaison, 2014
Glue on perspex and board, 103 x 70 cm (2 parts)



Alexander Heim
Unlikely Liaison, 2014
Installation view



Alexander Heim
Knight Without Title, 2014
1:5 scale model for free-standing sculpture, 43 x 40 x 7 cm



Alexander Heim
Passage To Aravanadi, 2012
Video still, digital video with sound, 10:00 min



Alexander Heim
Bonnets Nouveaux, Angelsächsische Hauben
Installation view, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg 2012



Alexander Heim
Bonnets Nouveaux, Angelsächsische Hauben
Installation view, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg 2012



Alexander Heim
Bonnets Nouveaux
Installation view, Kunstverein Freiburg, 2011



Alexander Heim
Untitled Bonnet No 5, 2012
found car part, split in two pieces, 90 x 220 cm



Alexander Heim
Untitled Bonnet No 7, 2012
found car part, split in two pieces, 150 x 190 cm



Alexander Heim
Untitled Bonnet No 6, 2012
found car part, split in two pieces, 90 x 240 cm



Alexander Heim
Bonnets Nouveaux
Installation view, Kunstverein Freiburg, 2011



Alexander Heim
Ammeral, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 60 x 40 x 30 cm



Alexander Heim
Ammeral, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 60 x 40 x 30 cm



Alexander Heim
Pinne, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 30 x 50 x 70 cm



Alexander Heim
Pinne, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 30 x 50 x 70 cm



Alexander Heim
Bulk, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 68 x 36 x 20 cm



Alexander Heim
Bulk, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 68 x 36 x 20 cm



Alexander Heim
Bambuse, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 70 x 50 x 40 cm



Alexander Heim
Zossen, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 40 x 40 x 40 cm



Alexander Heim
Nauke, 2011
found car part, painted clay, 30 x 25 x 50 cm



Alexander Heim
Installation view
Art Basel Statement, 2011



Alexander Heim
The Great Plastic Vortex, 2011
Video still, 06:00 min, continuous loop

Bonnets Nouveaux

The 'Untitled Bonnet' sculptures could be described as another species, descending from the previous car light sculptures. Being made from car bonnets, they are much bigger. One could say in comparison to the amorphous, creature-like clay sculptures that these ones have left the sea, rather resembling large plants or robotic dinosaurs. Each sculpture is made from one car bonnet, which is cut in two pieces. Similar to cell division, carefully planned cuts produce two new shapes, which are then arranged on the wall to form the final shape of the sculpture.

Like the smaller clay sculpture on the table, each of the 'Bonnets' has a certain character. Some of the shapes could literally be upscaled characters or symbols from a forgotten language, others remind of faces or standing figures. Their hard features and sometimes even razor blade-like cut lines give them a colder, more stylized appearance, like for example the villain in a cartoon.

Their features are more abstract and reduced, as there are no other materials involved than the original car part. Also the colour is the original paint job from the car factory, including some scratches and dents acquired on the way to the scrap yard. Nothing is added, yet the originally utilitarian car bonnet has been transformed quite dramatically to a completely new shape.

The Great Plastic Vortex

What reads like a bizarre title of a science fiction novel by J G Ballard or Philip K Dick, is actually taken from a real phenomenon, recently also dubbed as the 'Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch': A huge area in the centre of the North Pacific Gyre, where allegedly vast amounts of plastic debris are amassing in the circular current. In the recent past this garbage patch has been the focus of vivid speculations, some arguing it is posing a great threat for marine life and ultimately the entire food chain. Others are skeptic and believe it is just an urban myth. The Great Plastic Vortex is utilizing this phenomenon as a narrative between the displayed objects, in order to reflect on different aspects of our shifting perception of the natural environment.

The point of departure for this work was a video, then several small sculptures followed.

The video consists of a single shot of a garbage patch floating in front of a lock by the River Thames. The entire surface of the water within the frame is covered with urban debris. A layer of objects is floating in constant movement, going up and down with the waves, a never ending flux of changing shapes. The wobbling movement of the footage has a mesmerizing, almost hallucinatory effect on the eye. The initial repugnance triggered by the trash fades away after a few moments of watching. One tries to identify individual pieces of debris: Bottles, polystyrene packaging, a foot ball... There is an incredible amount of detail in the relatively small patch and the floating movement brings to mind the comparison of macro-cosmic structures.

The garbage patch in the ocean is a process of transformation on many different levels. There is the transformation of the materials involved, the plastic getting broken up by the waves and consumed by fish, potentially transforming the ecosystem itself. One could argue further, given the global scale of the garbage patch, that the plastic is actually becoming part of the natural environment: The more plastic is submerged into the ecosystem, the less valid seem the categories of man-made and natural objects to be. Will in the end our own conception of what we call 'Nature' be transformed as well? Future generations may not differentiate as much as we do between the two different categories, when for instance the man-made objects start to outnumber the natural ones or they simply continue to mix on a large scale as is this case.

A notion of transformation is also present in the sculptures. They share a strange resemblance with modified cars and mutant creatures. Using conventional craft materials and techniques, such as clay, marble and bronze casting, each sculpture consists of a ready-made car part inserted into a traditionally sculpted element. By inserting these ready-made car parts into another material, the arising shapes resemble marine creatures that seem to have undergone a metamorphosis: The front and back lights of cars are featuring like exaggerated eyes of a character's face in a comic or an alien from a science fiction movie.