

VI, VII

Than Hussein Clark
Recognition (Love at the Frankfurt Autoshow)
VI, VII
September 7 - November 18, 2017

- For JSR Mearns, who loved singing and hated speaking, with love wherever you are

The exhibition Recognition (Love at the Frankfurt Autoshow) and Love at the Frankfurt Autoshow [2017] the film produced along side it is an attempt to put the artist's thinking about the conflicts between the world of objects and the world of the theater under a harsh spotlight. These objects and this film are also the product of the ways in which he has tried to negotiate the push and pull between living and producing, theater and exhibition making, work and rest, as well as love and money, over the last five years.

In this suite of sculptural works there is a re-imagining of 1929 Bugatti Royale luxury car decorated with pastels in order to resemble a famous model pulled from a lake in St. Moritz 4 years ago and sold at auction for 5 million dollars. There are three large pastels of an Actress Performing Cocteau's La Voix Humaine. These are drawn from film stills taken from three movies about the world of the theater: Hitchcock's Stage Fright, Sydney Lumet's Stage Struck and Mankiewicz's All About Eve.

A gilded cabinet filled with LED signs scrolls text about the Patriarch 'Big Daddy' from Tennessee William's Family Drama Cat on Hot Tin Roof. There is an over-printed version of Dercon's new Volksbühne Program, two resin encapsulated Car showroom plants or Opera bouquets, made of laser cut brass. Materials originally obtained for the artist to build furniture with his now former partner of 15 years is repurposed here as a paravant and dressing table made of rare Cambodian wood.

All of these elements work towards self-recognition of the conflicts between Clark's theatrical ambitions and artistic ambitions over the last years, conflicts that have recently had dramatic personal consequences.

To understand and recognize these consequences, the artist has looked to the ways in which the world of the theater has pictured the life of the artist - Ibsen's When We Dead Awaken, for instance - and the ways in which the world of art has pictured the theater - most often through film. He looks back now at the works in the exhibition, the film, and his research and sees now that each part of this project has been defined by the figure of Love in Crisis, and the whiplashing between subject and object that the precarious present entails, perhaps best summed up by Bette Davis' in All about Eve (1950) when she says -

Funny business, a woman's career - the things you drop on your way up the ladder so you can move faster. You forget you'll need them again when you get back to being a woman. That's one career all females have in common, whether we like it or not: being a woman. Sooner or later, we've got to work at it, no matter how many other careers we've had or wanted. And in the last analysis, nothing's any good unless you can look up just before dinner or turn around in bed, and there he is. Without that, you're not a woman. You're something with a French provincial office or a book full of clippings, but you're not a woman. Slow curtain, the end.



Than Hussein Clark (b. 1981, New Hampshire, USA) is an artist, designer, performer, director, and writer based in London and Hamburg. His work explores economies and histories taken from architecture, the decorative arts, and theater to explore new trajectories for queer objects and subjectivities in the present. Recent exhibitions and performance projects include Yes, Yes, all the News That's Fit to Print, Art Basel Parours; A Month in the Country, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg; Tete-A-Tete (A Dolls House), Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; Tragedy Machine (with Villa Design Group), MIT, Cambridge, Mass; The 2016 Liverpool Biennial (with Villa Design Group); We Call it Ludwig (with Villa Design Group), Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Violet Crab at DRAF, David Roberts Art Foundation, London; DEBTS (Erotic Review Sinai), Futura, Prague; Republic Authorizations (L'Aigle à Deux Tetes), Mathew New York, New York; A Summer's Rest (Je T'aime Mont Blanc), with Villa Design Group, LISTE Performance Program, Junges Theater Basel; Inauguration of the Russian Season: The banquet (with Villa Design Group); Waves (Das Gluckliche Rothschild), Mathew Gallery, Berlin; Royal Institute of British Architecture, London; The Pool's Edge or Gstaad Will Never Change, Swiss Institute, New York. Forthcoming exhibitions include a solo exhibition at GAK, Bremen. Clark is a founding member of Villa Design Group and lives and works between London and Hamburg.