

Max Leiß

2014

CARAVAN: Aargauer Kunsthaus

Aarau, CH





4, 3, 1, 5, 6





- 1 *Le*, 2014, analogue print on baryta paper, framed, 32 x 25.5 x 3 cm
- 2 *25ième*, 2014, wood, cord, 45 x 15 x 5 cm
- 3 *RDV*, 2014, galvanised steel, various parts, ca. 400 x 250 x 220 cm
- 4 *au*, 2014, schamotte cast leftovers, ca. 220 x 140 x 80 cm
- 5 *chien*, 2014, cement, pebbles, soil, fern plant, ca. 80 x 60 x 90 cm
- 6 *chaud*, 2014, cement, pebbles, soil, laurel plant, ca. 100 x 70 x 190 cm

The objects of Max Leiß (b.1982) may be read as independent sculptures, yet they also combine with one another — through their careful placement in space — to form an integral installation. The nonrepresentational shapes made of metal, wood, brick dust, wire or concrete place themselves like obstacles in the way of the viewers and cause his or her attention to turn back and forth between the object and its architectural environment — such as the elements of the steel frame created for the exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus, which as a sculptural drawing of sorts define the space.

Max Leiß generates his sculptural vocabulary partly from found materials, partly from materials he creates himself. The reduced, abstract formal language evolves from an openended and experimental approach. In sometimes fragmentary form, older works find their way into his installations, creating new combinations and linking the past to the present and the feasible. These processes of transformation are an important component of the artist's work: the potential of growth, traces of unpredictable changes and temporal sequences. Those aspects are inherent in particular to the organic material of the plant sculptures. Less obvious, yet equally important to the artist is the "act local" approach — meaning that the materials used for this work are from the immediate surroundings of the studio. The pots have been cast in concrete from the studio's basement and the plants grew on the nearby bank of the Rhine River.

Increasingly, photographs of objects and architectural settings appear in Leiß's installations. Yet the artist is less interested in planned or staged work as in constellations that seem to come about in passing, that have grown over time and as a result of various functional requirements, be it in interior or outdoor spaces. The black and white pictures establish interrelations between the sculptures and create additional associative fields for his installations.

At the Aargauer Kunsthaus, the artist is installing his work within the collection presentation focusing on constructive and concrete tendencies. Considering the precise placement of the works, it is perhaps not surprising that Leiß invariably uses the exhibition space as the starting point for developing his arrangements. In the particular gallery at the Kunsthaus, which has three passages and a black asphalt floor, a certain coherence manifests itself between the work and its spatial context. For instance, the relationship between open and closed space, between aspects and insights that is inherent to his sculptures reflects the architectural setting in Aarau.

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