

PAUL CASAER - VITRINE

11 November – 21 December 2018

Paul Casaer's sculptures depart from the known; they capture shapes from our daily surroundings. He transforms these shapes and places them in a different context, where they come across as both surprising and inviting, thereby questioning our viewing. Paul Casaer gives the notion of sculpture a central place in his oeuvre. He investigates the components that make up a sculpture and attaches a certain materiality. In his oeuvre, a conceptual departure point is always inseparably in dialogue with the making of the work. The idea takes shape during the realisation process and as a result, working becomes a form of thinking. The object transforms until it gains a certain precision, until all noise disappears and both the artist and the observer achieve an experience. Even though his sculptural proposals have a certain radical nature, under no circumstances are they sterile or merely conceptual.

Involving himself in the quest of image-makers throughout time, Casaer produces sculptures that witness precarious systems, which witness doubt, uncertainties, shifts, absence, or image failure. At the same time, his sculptures relate to our direct surroundings. His works want to subvert the image; slightly disrupt the experience. He does this without grand gestures or valuable materials. He approaches elements from reality and makes them his own. In his recent work we recognise bookends, slide frames, support structures, empty moulds and ropes alongside playful shapes like a pretzel, bread, Toblerone chocolate or a flag. These are all shapes that comprise a strong resistance to abstraction and pure self-reference. They are constantly reworked and interpreted by the artist until they're stripped down and critical distance is created. The mould, the frame or the support are elements that recur in different combinations. They are part of the conditions of 'the sculpture'. These shells are given autonomy and therefore they interrogate our value system.

The new work that Paul Casaer realised for the Hopstreet Window in the Rivoli Building departs from the properties of space and the meanings that space evokes. The artist treats the original display window, which the gallery later transformed into a small white-cube box, as a window that promotes merchandise and encourages passers-by to purchase something. The object of this desire is exchangeable but the interaction remains the same: there is a display that's viewed, people ogle, desire and possibly succumb. The artist doesn't laud a specific object; he focuses on the dynamics generated by the context. In the window, he only presents a scale model of the window itself. He quotes the surroundings and thus changes the meaning. The mirror that he holds up doesn't offer a completely dovetailed image; though the sculpture scarcely deviates, a shift and remarks on the context arise.

Paul Casaer (b. 1967) is a lecturer at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (KASK) in Ghent. His work has been exhibited at Galerie Hanfweihnacht in Frankfurt, CAB in Brussels, Koraalberg Galerie in Antwerp, Flacc Genk, HGB Gallery Leipzig, Z33 Hasselt, Maison Grégoire Brussels, Fotomuseum Antwerp, Netwerk Aalst, Centro Universitario Mariantonia São Paulo, Gallery Archetype Brussels, MHKA Antwerp, Stedelijk Museum Lier, Be-part Waregem, Museum M Leuven, Musée des Beaux Arts Charleroi, Mu.ZEE Oostende, NICC Antwerp, Beursschouwburg Brussels, Witte De With Rotterdam, De Singel Antwerp, Paço das Artes São Paulo, CC Strombeek, University of Plymouth, Tafa Gallery Tianjin, Caldic Collectie Rotterdam and the Belgium Pavilion on the Architecture Biennale of Venice.

Eva Wittocx is an art historian and has been a curator and Head of Contemporary Art at the M-Museum in Leuven since 2009. In 2017 she was the curator of the Belgian pavilion at the Venice Biennale with Dirk Braeckman. Before that she was linked to the Museum of Contemporary Art (S.M.A.K.) and STUK Art Centre as a curator. She has organised Playground, an annual performance festival and partnership between M and STUK, since 2007.

Bio <http://www.paulcasaer.com/>