

Daniel Stubenvoll Nosy Neighbours

Opening: July 19, 2024 ••• 6-10pm
July 19 - August 23, 2024

The exhibition *Nosy Neighbours* presents new works by Daniel Stubenvoll, including an installation developed for the zqm. With an unusual directness, the exhibition title already points to the artistic centre of Daniel Stubenvoll's work: Relationships in and through urban environments – of space ergo architecture, entities and the socio-political structures that stem from them.¹ In the works presented here and in dialogue with the spaces, this focus is directed, among other things, in Stubenvoll's questioning of the (architectural) model. In the story *WORLF* (2024), Stubenvoll confronts visitors with the question of how and whether a world without architecture is conceivable for people.

Irregularly distributed throughout the room, five metal struts extend from the grey floor to the ceiling. Noses of colour and quick brushstrokes testify to a rather hasty paint job. In addition to the brushstrokes, slightly bent pieces of metal indicate a human presence. Like an indexical sign in the sense of Charles S. Peirce, the technical yet filigree building elements materialise their relationship to the absent – walls or other architectural elements, alterations in the space that were perhaps planned or even present and whose existence is now only attested to by their traces. Despite their merely skeletal presence, the struts bring about a rhythmisation of the space and allude to their ability to shift, interrupt and transform the relationships between the works.

Stubenvoll's group of works *Entity Logs* (2023/2024) is featured with four sculptural wall objects made of brass and wood, sometimes also clay and doormat fibres.² Barely ten to fifteen centimetres tall, thin brass struts are lined up either closely or with airy spacing, are added to at the sides and ultimately form small architectural structures. Tin solder serves as a bonding agent and transforms the shiny golden surface into a rough landscape through weld seams and abrasions. A material-aesthetic gesture that alludes to the potential history of the object. At the same time, the small works keep their individual stories to themselves: sometimes defensive, as if they were guarding a secret and would not tolerate any external glances or intruders, sometimes they stretch out towards the exhibition space with an unconcerned openness. What purpose they assume here — a model for an unrealised project, a miniature of existing architecture, archaic or futuristic visions — remains unclear. Perhaps it is the pairing of shimmering fragility and stable scaffolding, architectural model and utopia, that constitutes their fascination and at the same time denies them an immanent localisation - temporal or functional.

¹ The urgency and sensitivity of architecture is reflected not only in all social and political discourses but also in contemporary art, particularly with numerous exhibitions and projects dedicated to private living space. In this context — and the growing demand for an almost performative exhibition experience — the increasing presence of exhibition architecture also appears to be symptomatic. The question of what shifts occur within the exhibition ('at the expense?') of the works marks one of the central initial considerations for this exhibition project.

² The materials used by Stubenvoll in this exhibition and beyond — pieces of wood from model making, clay, tin solder, brass, newspaper, doormats or plastic mesh — suggest that they might be related to the *Arte Povera* or *Nouveaux Réalistes* tradition. From the 1960s onwards, both art movements used 'poor', inexpensive materials. Everyday objects and found items became components or even content for works of art, a swift towards the inclusion of everyday life in contemporary art. In view of his sociological approach, Stubenvoll's material—aesthetic decisions also logically reference and integrate our everyday environment.

As with architectural modelling, the *Entity Logs* are not subject to any binding practical concept. They act autonomously as small ecosystems, unperturbed by their real environment. Autonomous perhaps also because of their compositional relationship and affinity to one another. Thus, a central artistic vehicle for Stubenvoll's conceptual practice is the series. An approach that demonstrates the individual characteristics and commonalities within the group of works. Entity Logs — a technical term from IT — describes protocols that depict information about entities in a system and record changes or erasures of objects. Stubenvoll's *Entity Logs* also record differences and further developments within the work group as the singular work develops. In addition, the formal language of the group of works, characterised by the material brass, ties in with the series *Entity Models* (2022) — a constant progression or a moment of recycling, as the artist calls it.³

In addition to the approach of the conceptually evolving series, Stubenvoll also questions the construct of the copy: somewhere between Appropriation Art and Nouveaux Realist, *Colour Edge* (2024) postulates three found images from a family WhatsApp group as a work. An altered view of everyday visual material reveals artistic possibilities of reading and interpretation through appropriation:⁴ recontextualised, the amateur photographs, with their intense colour contrasts and artificial light reflections, unfold a sculptural quality that seems to possess its own model-like architecture, allowing their original function to fade into the background.

Entity Logs and *Colour Edge* each, in their own way, challenge a new way of encountering the surrounding space: as entities, they confidently claim the space despite their size. This sense of spatiality is reinforced by the struts: they unite, separate and isolate. In such moments of interpretation and reinterpretation, mental spaces open up, bit by bit, for visions or memories in and through our built environment, which could change at any moment.

– Maja Lisewski

Daniel Stubenvoll (*Giengen) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. His artistic practice includes conceptual photography, sculpture, painting and video art. Most recently, his works have been at newnow, Frankfurt (2023), SOOT Gallery, Tokyo (2023), Kunsthau Wiesbaden (2022), Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim (2022), Basis, Frankfurt (2020), Sandwich Gallery Bucharest (2020), Städtische Galerie Nordhorn (2019), at Georg Kargl Fine Art Vienna (2019), the Itoshima Arts Farm Fukuoka Festival (2018), the MMCA Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Seoul (2018), the Bangkok Biennial (2018) and the Historisches Museum, Frankfurt (2017). In addition to giving lectures and workshops at the Kunsthochschule Kassel (2024) and ZHdK, Zurich (2023), Stubenvoll is a jury member for the Willingshausen 2024 scholarship. His most recent monographic publication *Genius loci* was published by DISTANZ Verlag Berlin in 2022.

³ *Entity Models* (2022) in turn emerged from research into housing utopias with *Boot Leg* (2022) and architectural details such as brass windows. Both works were shown at the exhibition Daniel Stubenvoll: Beyond Limits 2 at Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim in 2022, curated by Muriel Meyer, artistic director of Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim.

⁴ See: Daniel Stubenvoll, *Boot Leg* (2022) and *Wir fördern Wendigkeit* (2016).