

REENA SPAULINGS FINE ART
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STEPHAN DILLEMUTH

The DAMNED

SEPTEMBER 13 – OCTOBER 11, 2015

For his long-awaited third appearance at Reena Spaulings Fine Art, Stephan DilleMuth presents *The DAMNED*, an installation of new sculptures and pictures all made on site in the weeks leading up to the exhibition. The first thing was to coat the entire floor with latex, then to “skin” or flay the gallery by peeling it off half-way, making a sort of veil in the space. Next the artist produced multiple plaster casts of himself, working part by part and gradually assembling a quantity of limbs and heads, which were then collaged back together using hooks and bungee cords. This process resulted in the emergence of three figures: *A Nymph*, *Satyr*, and *A Goat* (named after figures in the paintings of Poussin). The exhibition is “animated” by an electro-mechanical spasm or pulse that causes one sculpture to twitch and all the hanging pictures to jump on the wall. The pictures, based on a series of photographs DilleMuth produced for *Starship* magazine (“Abstraction Advancing Backwards,” *Starship* #12, 2015), are also skinned, glued on and then ripped off leaving abstract traces reminiscent of *nouveau realisme* works of the 60s. Plaster cogwheels recur throughout the show, in the photos and embedded within the figures.

Repeatedly casting his own body, DilleMuth is not making self-portraits so much as using himself as raw material. Rather than exploiting another’s image, the artist prefers to hack and dismember himself, producing a Bellmeresque stock of body parts which are then recombined to make these new others.

Animal parts sometimes enter into combination with human ones; anatomy drifts. Naked plaster has been coated with “flocking” to give these figures color and a new, soft skin. Hanging from the rafters, *A Goat* is rigged with fishing line to a motor that produces the kinetic, animating hiccup. *A Nymph* is a sort of unemployed fountain goddess without water and a cogwheel for a clamshell. *Satyr* has a tiny hole in its back through which a video can be spied: buried inside the sculpture is a time-based image of the artist with a flickering candle, possibly referencing Duchamp’s *Étant Donnée*. These collaged, crumbling, cobbled together figures are metaphors/avatars acting out both the mutilating pressures of neoliberalism upon its living subjects (“them” refugees and drone targets as well as “us” enjoyers of the metropolis) and the ongoing struggle to invent new forms-of-life within the grinding drift. Dipped in plaster for weeks, repeatedly printed out or shucked from his own moulds, working experimentally and letting mistakes guide him, the artist laughingly chooses the existentialist or “hard way” into materials, processes and meanings.

Stephan DilleMuth was born in 1954 in Hessen, lives in Bad Wiessee, Bavaria. He teaches at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Munich. Previous exhibitions include: *Neueröffnung* at Nagel/Draxler Galerie, Cologne, 2015; *Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel* at Secession/Vienna, 2012; *1st Retrospective* at Uma Certa Falta de Coerência/Porto, 2011; *The Hard Way to Enlightenment* at Transmission Gallery/Glasgow, 2010; *You Have Been Misinformed* (with Nils Norman) at RSFA/NY, 2008. More information: www.societyofcontrol.com

Gallery Hours: Thursday through Sunday, noon to 6pm.

