

NOT VITAL

HEARTS

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

24 Saturday - 19 Saturday



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce the presentation of an edition of the sculpture Heart by the Swiss artist Not Vital. Together with works on paper, it will be shown in the Department of Editions that was opened this summer in the Salzburg gallery.

Not Vital (*1948) was born in Sent, a village in the Engadine in the East of Switzerland. Today, he lives in Sent, New York, and the African city of Agadez. His career as an artist started in the seventies, but only in the early eighties did he turn to sculpture. The oeuvre of Not Vital includes sculptures, objects, and multiples, as well as drawings and graphic prints. He frequently uses plaster, glass, or precious materials like bronze, marble, and gold.

His hometown in the Engadine and the nature of that Alpine region are important sources of creativity for Not Vital. But his countless journeys and stays in various countries and cultures, especially in Africa and Asia, have also shaped his work considerably. The Swiss artist keeps looking for the impressive, the unusual, and the astonishing. "Not Vital is not interested in cultivating a 'style' or a 'trademark'", says Markus Stegmann. "He has rather remained faithful to his very own working method over the years, which is to capture and materialise ideas spontaneously from the present. Questions of form are of secondary importance to him. What matters is authenticity and the inner strength of the ideas", as the author of Not Vital's catalogue raisonné continues.

Often, the complexity and humour of the works are not immediately recognised. For example, with the Buatschas [Buachas], the cowpats cast on bronze. In India and Nepal, cowpats are an important form of fuel, whereas in the western world, it costs "a lot of money to get rid of the same material. One third of the children in Nepal suffer burn injuries because they feel cold or are hungry and therefore come too close to the fireplace" (Not Vital). Nepal has no hospital ward for burn injuries; so the artist started to cast cowpats in bronze and sell them in the west to raise money for building a ward for burn injuries in the east. Werner Meyer described the importance of the sculptural concept of the Buatschas, even beyond the social commitment of the artist: "Collected in his hometown Sent in the Engadine, turned into a bronze artwork, a new meaning becomes apparent, a different kind of appreciation, and a distinct value of the content-the meaning of the image as compared to the object transformed into an image by art."

In addition to sculptures and objects, drawing is also an important medium for Not Vital. Highly abstract animals, mountains, or non-representational forms are recurrent motifs. Another characteristic feature of his works on paper is the absence of colour. Most of his drawings are kept in black and white or various shades of grey and brown. Much like his sculptures, Not Vital's drawings also display his fondness of experimenting with materials. Not only pencil, but sticky tape, soil, or dental floss are used as artistic means, for instance.