Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Paris. April 4, 2016

Dear Noel,

Today Christoph Weber arrived at the gallery, along with a new body of work, intended for our upcoming gallery show. I admit I am not only charmed and seduced but excited too: the 11 sculptures are made in one grand gesture, combining the use of chance operations side by side with precise knowledge and calculation of the influence of the length, width and weight on his mixture of concrete. Christoph truly seems to have mastered concrete in its materiality as well as in its particular characteristics. The show with the title Carton/Pierre is sophisticated and playful, synthesizing on materials like steel, felt cardboard and aluminium, introducing them in new relations with the concrete.

You know what carton-pierre is, right? Besides referring to a type of papier mâché that includes a portion of chalk in its paper mix, the term also suggests cheap facade, or backdrop – a Las Vegas. This gap, situated between reality and assumption is what I believe Christoph is actually addressing in his work. He designed a pyramid of vision, for the viewer to experience a feeling of displacement – it is funny, and it works well.

The central heartbeat of our show is a two part concrete sculpture of approx. 500 kg in weight. Both its rectangular single elements tumbled to the ground, lying now, slightly slanted on top of each other, holding and supporting, and revealing their hidden interior to pictorial gorges. The piece which is titled Beton (gestossen) reminds me of the work you own. In contrast to your Untitled (Gegenstück) from 2010, which appears to have been broken apart from a single monolith block but, in fact, was sculpted and moulded in a classical manner, the new piece seems shock frozen. Here, chance has its final play – and to speak with Fiona Liewehr: "displays an innate dichotomy between construction and destruction, violence and tenderness, depression and hope."

A second, larger-in-scale sculpture divides the corridor between our first and second part of the newly renovated exhibition space. Two standard-sized steel plates (1 x 2 m), placed on the floor as well as upright, in an angle to the wall, as determined by our architecture, initiate the slide of a slab of concrete. As with Beton (gestossen) the concrete seems shock frozen in its sliding. The term "shock frozen" by the way is borrowed from Thomas Trummer. It accentuates perfectly the element of time, so important in Christoph's thinking and artistic vocabulary as well as with the handling of the works.

I admire the sensuous surface of the steel contrasting with the grey density of the concrete. What a wonderful material concrete is: it may even camouflage and adapt the quality of its associate partners, get all shiny and smooth like Plexiglas as with a 10 cm thick batch of concrete with sharply fringed edges, arched and placed on top of a felt square on a metal pedestal. Christoph poured the concrete on a Plexiglas to be able to slightly bend this sheet and remove it again after curing. The result is breath taking.

Also several batches of concrete shovelled into neat small cardboard boxes are displayed in groups in the entire space that show its rather more sandy rough side. Here too, the two materials, cardboard and concrete, partner up in dialogue.
There is much to experience and to discover, dear Noel, come and see for yourself. The show will be on until May 21st. Christoph's next two institutional shows are in the Kunstraum Düsseldorf next week and the Kunstverein Leipzig in May.

Let's speak soon.
All the best, Jocelyn

PS: My favourite are two canvas pieces, titled after the show: Carton, pierre. Concrete is displayed here two dimensionally as a plane that holds the white papier mâché in a sharp upright crease. As with these two wall works you will find many turnarounds of the usually familiar connotations of forms and material combinations.

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CHRISTOPH WEBER, carton/pierre
Exhibition April 9 - May 21, 2016, Opening on April 8, 2016
open from Tuesday to Saturday, from 11AM to 7PM and by appointment