

GALERIE MARIA BERNHEIM

Mitchell Anderson

Partial Gift

November 13 - December 23, 2020

Galerie Maria Bernheim is pleased to present "Partial Gift", our second solo-exhibition of Zurich-based American artist Mitchell Anderson. The exhibition consists of three newly developed bodies of work continuing Anderson's interests in collective coding, the narrative possibilities of existing objects and social forms and investigations into the paradoxes of societal generosity and cooperation. "Partial Gift" refers to a type of philanthropic endeavor and tax benefit where property ownership is donated to an organization in part while possession and enjoyment is maintained.

Anderson debuts a new series of intensely physical paintings, executed in encaustic, the ancient medium that uses heat, beeswax and natural resin, in layered hues of varying reds. A color of extremes, red collectively represents a variety of supposed opposites: love, revolution, anger, caution, valor, luck... It's this openness and rejection of static meaning within a current society that tends to focus on issues in only black and white that attracted Anderson to rethink the meaning and use of the monochrome in the 21st century. Each painting depicts the design of a stained glass window with a hand holding a single rose, an image cribbed from the introduction to Walt Disney's 1991 hallmark animated film, *Beauty and the Beast*. Anderson views this motif as a paradoxical image of generosity, capital and societal teamwork. Undeniably, the viewer is confronted with a rephrasing of Jasper Johns' iconic "an image the mind already knows", whose sexually charged targets Anderson's works relate to in both image and medium.

The exhibition also includes a set of four works in varying shades of red neon, all presenting the word 'join'. Each is presented in a different font, continuing Anderson's ongoing interest in the sagas and content civilization embeds in even the seemingly smallest visual cues. Grabbed from posters ranging from a 1754 call for state unity designed by Benjamin Franklin to a 1990 stack piece by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, the neon works become beacons for an open recruitment and teamwork temporarily freed from politics and history.

Continuing Anderson's decade long involvement in the possibilities and limits of readymade sculpture the exhibition also debuts works from a recent series of objects collected from the streets near his studio. All are situations left outside apartments with signs declaring themselves as free to take: "gratis" or "zum mitnehmen". Similar to his series of street vending sculptures, purchased in touristic cities and exhibited over the past decade, Anderson searches for strong sculptural forms that reflect on wider social mores: here the dichotomy of littering and gifting in public space and how generosity is outwardly portrayed in society.

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In all of the works, Anderson is interested in exposing and exploring full ranges of dualities and meanings that exist within a wider social context. Each of his media transformations: built up, found and produced belies a multiplicity of layered connotations and facts of a communal universe (political, sexual and emotional) in constant, yet optimistic, flux.

Mitchell Anderson was born in Chicago, USA in 1985 and currently lives in Switzerland. Recent institutional exhibitions include Fondazione Converso, Milan (2019) and Fri-Art Kunsthalle Fribourg (2017). Recent and upcoming institutional group exhibitions include Kunsthalle Zurich (2020), Kunsthalle Bern (2021), Kunsthalle Basel (2020) and MAMCO, Geneva (2019). He is a nominee for the 2020 Prix Mobilière, is a frequent contributor of criticism to a variety of international arts publications and has operated the project space Plymouth Rock, in Zurich, since 2014.

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