UMPRUM Academy of Arts Architecture & Design in Prague

PRESS RELEASE

EPHEMERAL_ETERNAL

An exhibition by UMPRUM at Salone Internazionale del Mobile, Milan
Dates: 4th April – 9th April 2017
Opening hours: Tue – Sat 10am-8pm, Sun 10am-6pm
Opening: Wednesday 5th April at 7pm

Location: Via Privata Oslavia 3, Ventura Lambrate, Milan

The Academy of Arts Architecture & Design in Prague (UMPRUM) once again presents work at *Salone Internazionale del Mobile*, the international furniture and design fair in Milan. This year UMPRUM presents the exhibition EPHEMERAL_ETERNAL, which juxtaposes the school's 130-year tradition of timeless art-craft values with current trends to critique consumerist lifestyles.

The project's curator Lada Hubatová-Vacková describes the theme of the exhibition: "We've taken these old plaster models, which belong to the timeless aesthetic canon and form part of the school's identity, to provide context for this upcoming exhibition at Salone del Mobile 2017 in Milan. The theme of the exhibition is the semantic counterpoint between various approaches to time – ephemeral or eternal, mobile or stable, fast or last, instantaneous or durable – as a means of questioning the temporality of objects and images."

The exhibition consists of a selection of three original collections by UMPRUM students/graduates. **Ondřej Přibyl** takes the daguerreotype, a unique and labour-intensive photographic technique dating to the 19th century, and appropriates it for modern times. **Vendula Radostová** shows how various objects decompose over time. Unfired sculptures from the traditional porcelain producer Royal Dux are submerged into an aquarium filled with water where they gradually disintegrate. **Lenka Vacková** highlights the negative effects of consumerism and the fashion industry as well as the futility of our obsession with accumulating things. This exhibition in Milan involves a screened performance, which documents her body being tattooed with the logos of famous brands. Instead of permanent tattoo ink Vacková's own blood is used, which gradually disappears much like a fleeting fashion trend. Vacková will attend each performance during the exhibition.

UMPRUM's vice-rector and exhibition architect Prof. Jiří Pelcl explains the main concept behind the project: "We don't consider our exhibition a radical protest against ever-increasing consumerism. We rather want to point out and question the fragile border between ephemerality and eternity. It is this awareness that informs not just this exhibition but the school's entire output".

Exhibitors: Ondřej Přibyl, Vendula Radostová, Lenka Vacková
Curator: Lada Hubatová-Vacková
Architect: Jiří Pelcl
Graphic design: Anežka Hrubá Ciglerová

Vendula Radostová
***Entropy of Items from the Royal Dux Factory*, 2015, video**
Unfired sculptures arranged in a Rococo salon style – originally made at the Royal Dux factory, a traditional porcelain producer from the Northern Bohemian town of Duchcov – are filmed being submerged in an aquarium filled with water where they gradually dissolve. What are we witness to? The disintegration of painstakingly assembled works of art? The disappearance of traditional handicraft from a once-renowned factory? The deterioration and ultimate ruination of bygone social mores, rituals and etiquette? Or is it the transformation of the old world into the new, the contours of images lost in the fog?

Lenka Vacková
***Fast or Last*, 2016–2017, performance and installation**
A protest against fast fashion, sweatshops and consumerism, Vacková's screened performance shows her body being tattooed with the logos of famous brands. Instead of using standard long-lasting tattoo ink pigment ("eternal ink"), a tattoo artist uses Lenka's own blood. The blood tattoo logos gradually disappear, much like a fleeting trend. Blood is used as an expression of dissent against the fact that someone else always pays the price for our own vanity.
Vacková's installation is composed of a number of identical white shirts hung on a sales rack. The focus is not on each single shirt but on the quantity of shirts produced. Sewn into a monolithic plastic unit, they highlight the absurdity of our obsession with accumulating things. The installation assumes the style of a store window, featuring the neon logo L&V. Here, conceptual and pop-art backgrounds meet at the juncture of contemporary fashion, with the store's hyper-prosaic arrangement informing the artist's critique of consumerist oblivion.

Ondřej Přibyl
***Selected Collections: The Signs of Causality* (2011), *Children* (2012), *The Mechanical Viewer* (2014), *Ephemeral_Eternal* (2017), daguerreotype**
Ondřej Přibyl's final thesis is devoted to exploring the possibilities of appropriating the photographic technique of daguerreotype in a modern context. The daguerreotype invention was publicly launched in 1839. It was the first practical method to produce a permanent positive image. Silver halides developed on a polished mirror surface of highly pure silver are used as a photosensitive substance. The sensitised sheet is produced using a photographic device to expose a latent image using mercury vapour. This image is composed of silver amalgam particles created by condensing mercury vapour in the parts of silver excluded by photolysis. Non-exposed halides are washed away during stabilisation. The ability to create these types of images distinguishes the daguerreotype from all other commonly used photographic methods. Přibyl admires the chemical and artisanal characteristics of this old technique, the uniqueness of each metal sheet and the fact that the one image can never be reproduced.
The artist has chosen eight daguerreotypes for the exhibition. Documenting the disposal of waste at an industrial incineration plant in Prague, Přibyl shows the impermanence of items produced and disposed of by the human hand on daguerreotype sheets – images that are preserved forever. As well as images of plants and landscapes, two casts of a child's face have been specially created for this exhibition in Milan.

About the Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design in Prague (UMPRUM)
The Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design in Prague was founded in 1885. Throughout its existence it has ranked among the best educational institutions in the country. It boasts a number of successful graduates who have gone on to become respected professionals, garnering acclaim beyond the Czech Republic. The school is divided into the departments of architecture, design, fine arts, applied arts, graphic and theory and history of art. Each department is divided into studios according to their specialist area. The studios are all led by leading figures of the Czech art scene. Twice a year the school opens to the public for a presentation of student work, entitled "Artsemestr". Each year the school organises over 15 exhibitions, half of which are shown abroad. Prague UMPRUM is the only Eastern European school that figures in the indices of prestigious European and world art schools.

For more information:
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