

KRAFTWERK BERLIN
15–18 SEPT 2016
MARTIN GEORGE

Sculptural absurdities living among us in the everyday



EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

In this troubled world of earthquakes, floods, wars and global warming, it is a sheer delight to find a dedicated sculptor with such an ironic sense of humor and a highly developed sense of the ridiculous.

While Martin George can undoubtedly make a totally convincing piece of modernist sculpture, viewable from all directions and immaculately constructed, he also likes in catching the spectator unawares. Things are frequently not quite as they first seem. Forms twist and turn and tie themselves in knots, while other forms unexpectedly project from the wall. A pommel is normally associated with a gym, but in one work the sculptor links this ready-made with a fragment of linear sculpture – a white line that suggests the trajectory of a departed gymnast. Delighting in deception, in another work he has placed an over-sized industrial weight of 20 kilos on an elegant marble table, as though it is a piece of modernist sculpture.

And as an observer of our almost obsessive use of iPhones – these virtually indispensable possessions which are used on trains, in street, in cafes and restaurants – he has put several fake marble iPhones in a golden ciborium. They almost look as though they are part of a religious ceremony, but this is not meant to be sacrilegious; it is, rather, a reflection of Martin George's observation that Australians almost worship their iPhones.

Again, he holds up to ridicule the pretentious vocabulary used by some art writers: words such as 'materiality'. In a print manipulated by Photoshop, he not only stresses the materiality of his own constructions, but also brings in two body builders to add to that materiality. And in another instance of Photoshop manipulation, and this time with an entrepreneurial flourish, he has amusingly placed his sculpture on the red carpet during the Cannes Film Festival.

Knowing that a certain sense of self-promotion has become a prerequisite for success in the contemporary art world, Martin George has, on a number of occasions and without seeking permission, placed his sculpture in public places in Melbourne, simply leaving the public to puzzle over it and for the sculpture to fend for itself.

A welcome, but last minute sale to an Australian collector, has prevented the sculptor from exhibiting one of his most successful and joyous works: a large, elegant piece of abstract sculpture placed on top of a small music box. Spectators turning a key can wind up the mechanism and hear a popular tune playing as the sculpture slowly rotates. It is a work that elicits smiles and laughter from young and old. Not often is contemporary sculpture associated with laughter.

Ken Scarlett, OAM

THE LORNE BIENNALE 2016 SCULPTURSCAPE WINNER

The Judicious Application of Optimism is a new large-scale work by Martin George. The piece captures a 380 cm long lounging female form in bronze and will be interred at the beginning of the exhibition left only partially visible but with the invitation for visitors to participate in an archaeological dig to reveal the work. The piece takes the form of a relic practically and conceptually. This is a relic of a former relationship, memories exhumed through the help of others revealing something beautiful that was buried. Started by the artist, completed once unearthed by the viewer.



The Judicious Application of Optimism
380cm x 150cm x 150cm
Photo: Cormac Hanrahan

MONTALTO SCULPTURE PRIZE FINALIST 2016



Zwei Tänzer is inspired by a child's music box. Turning the key clockwise plays *Blumenwalzer* and turning it anti clockwise plays *Edelweiss* – both connecting with European folklore and hundreds of years of handed down children's stories. This piece provokes a narrative of romanticism through nostalgia, I want to suggest that through reflection on our past, we can prescribe a future containing the most optimistic parts of our childhood, where re-imaginings inspire and encourage our lives in the everyday.

Zwei Tänzer
420cm x 120cm x 120cm

BERLINER LISTE 2016 A PIVOTING

Sprint up, jump, swing wildly, exit.tixe ,yldliw gniws ,pmuj ,pu trirpS. Now consider dextrously approaching a movement, centrifuge through it, exit nearly gracefully.¹ Hold on, hold on... Can one retrace such moves? Thankfully, for each elegant action – and of course for the markers of history – there is a form and a memory that promises to double backwards for us: it's surely why culture ends up with formal memorials. But truthfully, what remains of the form previously traced, and what remains of the trace previously formed? Do they give rise to essences or abstractions? Intimacies or deferrals? Fundamentally, do they touch the core or do they flash across surfaces as if at speed? The new clashes against the old, reflections ricochet, references rebound. Hold on, hold on tight to the pommel.

Dr. Michael Graeve Lecturer, RMIT School of Art (Sound; Sculpture and Spatial Practice; MFA Program; Expanded Studio Practice)

¹ Needless to say, movement might here refer to either a movement, or to a movement, or to both, though the latter is the most likely, particularly given the aestheticism of the sculptural forms employed for their significantly heightened materiality performed in this case, surely a cheekily calculated signifying materiality on which the meaning of this work so emphatically pivots?



Industrial Pommel
300cm x 200cm x 130cm



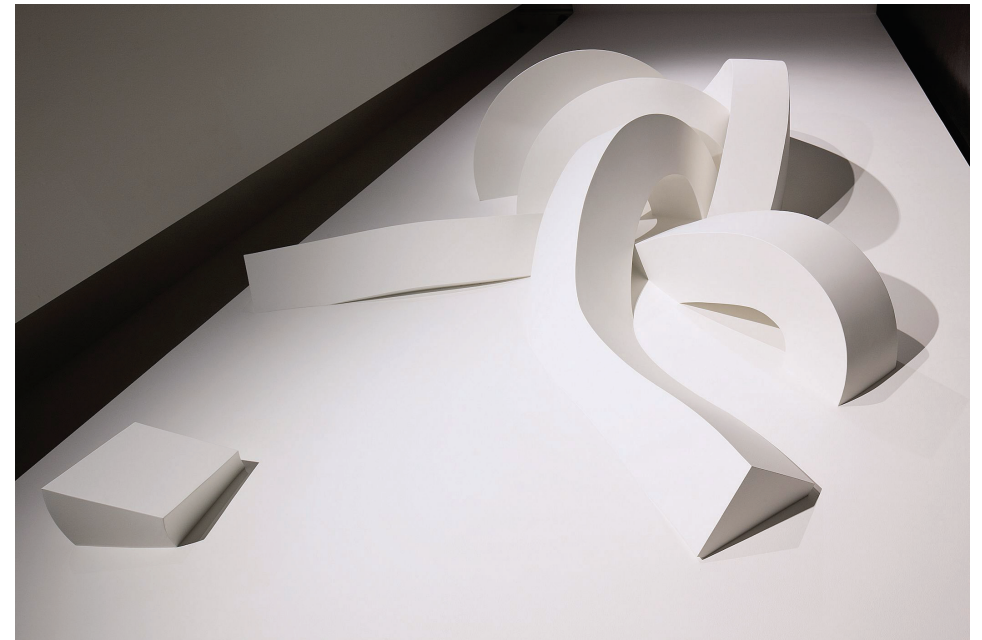
Embrace Piccolo
hand burnished stainless steel,
130cm x 60cm x 60cm



Dislocated element
mirror polished stainless steel, ready-made medicine ball
130cm x 130cm x 60cm



Little Black Knot
painted corten steel
130cm x 120cm x 120cm, artist proof



Metastasis A,B,C,D & E
galvanised and painted steel. set on fire by oxy acetylene
253mm x 253mm square extrusions, various dimensions
Photo: Shannon Mcgrath



TOP
Even aluminium
 ready-made spoon, cast aluminium



RIGHT
Breaking Classicism
 ready-made weight and side table, steel, marble, fibre glass
 110cm x 60cm x 60cm



TOP LEFT
Arabesque on the red carpet
 editioned prints

TOP RIGHT
Maybe I'm not doing this communion thing right?
 ready-made gold ciborium, carrara marble
 iPhones, found TV dinner table
 (Collaboration with Raffaella Mazzone)

LEFT
Working hard on my materiality
 editioned prints

COVER
Industrial Pommel
 300cm x 200cm x 130cm

Design by Erika Budiman

