

Aargauer Kunsthaus

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## Augustin Rebetez, *Vitamin*, 18.2. – 29.5.2023

Media Release

Aarau, February 2023

In 2011, when Augustin Rebetez (\*1986 in Delémont) held his first solo presentation at the Aargauer Kunsthaus as part of the Caravan series for young artists, he was only 25 years old and had just completed his photography studies. Even then, his expansive wall installation showed that the photograph frame was not big enough for him. The works of the artist from western Switzerland conjure up fantastical worlds and shatter everyday conventions with sinister nonchalance. With *Vitamin*, his most comprehensive solo exhibition to date, Augustin Rebetez takes occupancy of the entire ground floor of the Aargauer Kunsthaus with his unmistakable, yet universally relatable mythical creatures and dream architectures.

“HEY, YOU, COME CHECK MY STUFF! PLEASE, LOOK AT ME! COME ON! SEE ME NOW!” – bordering on the pushy, Rebetez’ latest video production pesters visitors to the Aargauer Kunsthaus for their attention. The work *Vitamin* (2023) is shrill, garish and leaves us excited and full of curiosity to learn more about this pulsating cosmos. But *Vitamin* warns from the very start of the eponymous exhibition: It may get loud and uncomfortable. That suits Augustin Rebetez just fine: He has no qualms about challenging his public and is happy to fight fire with fire. In an instant, the bleak chill of winter is replaced with a pleasant warmth – Rebetez’ works crackle with energy and ignite his delight in transforming the challenges and contradictions of modern life into a sensory storm.

After the first dose of *Vitamin*, light boxes, monographs and miniatures invite visitors to explore Rebetez’ Wonderland in Aarau. Hanging from transparent threads, his glittering flocks of birds flit about the visitors’ heads. They lead over adhesive film-covered floor and walls to new photographs and paintings. One of the great highlights of this solo exhibition will be the project *Throw Your Shadows* (2018), on display in Switzerland for the first time: In this environment, a combination of projection, laser show and strobe lights, Rebetez draws the observer into a narrative stream which uses Art as a means to bring the body into a state of ecstatic trance similar to the religious rites of peoples from ancient civilisations. At a time when more and more people are seeking their own spiritual paths in yoga, shamanism, or indeed sport, the museum is transformed into a unique space of spiritual contemplation, not just for *Throw Your Shadows*: A chapel has been built in the Kunsthaus, and it also invites visitors to experience Art as a place where community is nurtured.

Community is also a major theme of the new exhibition of bronze sculptures created by the Kunstgiesserei Rüetschi AG in Aarau and sponsored by the Aargau Art Association. *THE FAMILY* (2023) consists of five larger-than-life birds placed around the inner courtyard of the Aargauer Kunsthaus. They remind us that, ultimately, we all belong to one family, Humankind, even though we come from everywhere and are travelling in different directions. Birds are encountered time and time again in Rebetez' oeuvre, and they symbolise freedom and the pursuit of higher things for the artist.

Rebetez is both a collector and a storyteller. He simply assimilates relatable symbols which resonate between cultures, and condenses them into ensembles and scenographies. As a result, not only does he successfully create a poetic blend of high and low art, but, more significantly, his strikingly raw productions serve as a stage for the grotesque dramas of daily life: Despots reveal their true faces, distorted by lust for power, cats appear as the little monsters they can sometimes be, and a mislaid mobile phone serves as the inspiration for a punk hit. Augustin Rebetez involves us in his art. It is strange and idiosyncratic, and it is exactly what we all need right now. How would we know that? One of Rebetez' little birdies told us.

On the subject of birds: For *Vitamin*, Rebetez is also producing an exclusive edition of 60 enchanting silver pendants. Those who find Rebetez' works truly irresistible can satisfy their hearts' desires with merchandise items by the artist from western Switzerland in the Kunsthaus shop. The Aargauer Kunsthaus is also promoting two of the artist's books in association with the exhibition: *VERY CHARMING ANIMALS. CATS* (2023) is a parody of the cuteness of cats in Internet culture. To mark the opening of *Vitamin*, Rebetez also presents his latest artist book *THE GOOD LIFE. A PRACTICAL GUIDE* (2023), which debunks the tips and life hacks from friends and acquaintances as meaningless phrases and questions the social dogma of "being happy".

#### **Aargau Art Association Edition**

Silver pendant, number in series: 60. (title and price to be announced)

#### **Publications in conjunction with *Vitamin***

*THE GOOD LIFE. A PRACTICAL GUIDE* (2023), with text by Bassma El Adisey, Publisher: Label Rapace, Illustrations: NORM, Zürich, ISBN 978-2-940695-10-2 (220 pages, CHF 38)

*VERY CHARMING ANIMALS. CATS* (2023), Publisher: Label Rapace, Illustrations: NORM, Zürich, ISBN 978-2-940695-11-9 (48 pages, CHF 36)

**Augustin Rebetez** (\*1986) lives and works in Mervelier (Jura, Switzerland). In 2009, he completed his degree in Photography at the CEPV – Centre d'enseignement professionnel de Vevey. While his roots are in Jura, the enfant terrible of the Swiss art scene soon began to expand his practice by traveling and spending time abroad. The artist always works with an enormous range of media to create expansive installations which were already shown in many solo and joint exhibitions. Since 2020, he has published books through his own publishing company, Label Rapace, and runs his own Artists' House, a mixture of museum and atelier, where he continues to develop his works combining photography, film, music, sculpture and performance art and offers them as an all-encompassing work of art to the public. The many awards the Jura native has won include the Kiefer Hablitzel Prize (2012), the Grand Prix Images Vevey (2013), the Swiss Art Award (2019) and the Alfred Latour Prize (2019). The exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus is his most comprehensive solo exhibition to date.

**Curator**

Dr. Katharina Ammann

**Assistant Curator**

Bassma El Adisey

**Preview for the Media**

Thursday 16.2. 11 a.m.

Information and registration: [christina.omlin@ag.ch](mailto:christina.omlin@ag.ch)

**Exhibition Opening**

Friday 17.2. starting at 5 p.m.

**Early Viewing for Members of Aargau Art Association**

Friday 17.2. 4 – 5 p.m.

Exclusively for members of the Aargau Kunstverein

**Action! Tour and Screening of Video Works with the Artist (in English)**

Thursday 13.4. 6 p.m.

**Closing Event**

Sunday 28.5. starting at 10 a.m.

The full supporting programme is available on [aargauerkunsthaus.ch](http://aargauerkunsthaus.ch)

**Appreciation**

The exhibition is sponsored by: Aargau Canton, Aargau Art Association, Swisslos Aargau Canton, the City of Aarau, the Federal Office of Culture, the Swiss Cultural Foundation Pro Helvetia, the Hans Eugen and Margrit Stucki Liechti (HMSL) Foundation, the Landis & Gyr Foundation, the Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz (FPFS), the Erna & Curt Burgauer Foundation. Special thanks are due to Videocompany und Skylight – Event- und Mediatechnik.

**Aargauer Kunsthaus Opening Hours**

Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Monday closed

**Opening Hours on Federal Holidays**

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Holy Thursday 6.4.2023

Good Friday 7.4.2023

Easter Sunday 9.4.2023

Easter Monday 10.4.2023

Labour Day 1.5.2023

Ascension Day 18.5.2023

Whitsun 28.5.2023

Whit Monday 29.5.2023

**Photo Material**

Our website [www.aargauerkunsthhaus.ch](http://www.aargauerkunsthhaus.ch) > Medien contains many photos for downloading. Please take note of the picture credits.

**Additional Information**

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