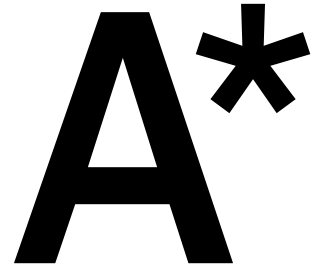


Media Release

Aarau, January 2020



CARAVAN 1/2020: Dominic Michel

Series of Exhibitions of Young Art

25 January – 26 April 2020

Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

Dominic Michel (b. 1987) examines the cultural significance of objects and the way this significance can be changed in his works. In his CARAVAN exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus, Michel shows a full-scale grand piano of wood which is missing its innards. As a result, the instrument is transformed from a prestige object into an empty shell and, figuratively speaking, a mere sounding board.

Dominic Michel already dealt with interior spaces and hollow cavities in earlier works: in his 2018 piece *Untitled (American Bar)* he coloured the insides of drinking glasses with a greenish-yellow antiseptic. The objects are reminiscent of the drinking glasses the architect Adolf Loos (1870–1933) designed for the legendary American Bar in Vienna, and they raise the issue of the transition from modernist design to industrial product. Loos' drinking set *No. 248* is available for sale to this day. For *Mob Mob Mob Mob Mob* (2019) Michel likewise painted the insides of glass vessels. This work addresses the representation of light in painting and transparency as a carrier and a membrane between content and form. In both works, the artist makes changes to existing objects, thereby assigning new meanings to them.

Musical instruments frequently recur in Michel's work. *C D E F G A H C* (2017) features flutes which are suspended in front of the stock listings of the *Financial Times*. Michel is particularly interested in the German composer Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), who regarded the musician as a craftsman rather than an artistic genius. Hindemith was an advocate of *Gebrauchsmusik* (music for use) which, rather than being pursued as a mere end in itself, was to be placed in the service of society. Michel's preoccupation with the universal musician has previously yielded a number of works. Audio recordings, for instance, document how he interpreted and improvised Hindemith's 1930 opera *We're Building a City* together with little children aged one to three years. At its original premiere, the opera was performed by children aged 8 to 12, and Hindemith insisted that the work was "written for the instruction and practice of the children themselves rather than for the entertainment of adult viewers".

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In his CARAVAN exhibition, Dominic Michel presents a grand piano of wood, which is clearly modelled on an original, functional concert grand. However, its surfaces are not painted or lacquered and there are no keys. From the rough wooden surface alone, it is immediately clear that this grand piano is not playable. A look inside confirms this: all the strings and the entire grand piano mechanism are missing. The exclusive musical instrument is turned into a hollow object and the absent becomes the actual subject. What is fascinating to the artist about this work is the paradox process of unbuilding a technically complex object to its basic form and presenting it detached from its original function.

A new photographic work frames the exhibition space like a frieze. It is an 18-part series that Michel realized in the Parisian suburb of Nanterre, where the high-rise buildings of *Tours Aillaud* are located. On the one hand, the towers from the 1970s are famous for their unusual shape and the design of their cover with colorful mosaic stones, on the other hand, they also stand for an idealistic social housing architecture. Michel took panoramic photographs in the neighbourhood through which the titling Allée de l'Arlequin passes. He digitally formed the photographs into spheres and then transferred them back into two dimensions. The result is reminiscent of watches, and especially in the background of the grand piano, of vinyl records.

Dominic Michel, born in Klingnau (Canton of Aargau) in 1987, lives and works in Zürich. 2019 Master of Fine Arts, HGK Basel and ASFA Athens; 2015 co-founder of the artist-run space RIVERSIDE (riverside-space.ch); 2014 Bachelor of Visual Communication, University of the Arts Bern; 2013 co-founder of the artist-run space FALKO in Basel.

Selected Group Exhibitions to Date: *A House is not a Home*, Fri Art, Fribourg (2019); *I Hood*, Kunsthaus Baselland (2019); *Crisis of Glass Bell*, TANK Basel (2019); *Cantonale Bern/Jura*, Kunsthalle Bern (2018); *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*, Kunstverein Freiburg i.B. (2018); *Break Time*, Solonos, Athens (2018); *Infos*, Real Positive, Cologne (2017); *Auswahl 17*, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau (2017); *Winding at Once*, Urgizy, Densbüren (2017); *Look, all this is fraud*, Milieu Bern (2017); *Beyond the Real*, Kunsthalle Basel (2016); *Belong Anywhere*, Garret Grimoire, Vienna (2016)

Curator

Bettina Mühlebach, Assistant Curator, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

CARAVAN Series of Exhibitions of Young Art

The CARAVAN Series of Exhibitions of Young Art offers visitors to the Aargauer Kunsthaus the opportunity to make surprising encounters with young Swiss artists from all over Switzerland and discover as yet unestablished artistic practices. Over the course of the year, three solo exhibitions in the form of "mobile interventions" can be found in different locations within the museum. The artists are invited to bring their works into a dialogue with the building, the collection or the programme of the Kunsthaus.

*Aargauer Kunsthaus

CARAVAN Website

Please visit the web platform for the CARAVAN Series of Exhibitions of Young Art! Find information on all past and current CARAVAN exhibitions in the digital archive and follow the newsfeed to stay informed about CARAVAN-related news in the social media. <http://caravan.aargauerkunsthau.ch>

Preview for the Media

Thursday, 23 January 2020, 10.30 am

Words of welcome by Simona Ciuccio, Curator of the Collection, Aargauer Kunsthaus; introduction by Bettina Mühlebach, Assistant Curator, Aargauer Kunsthaus. Followed by a reception in the foyer.

Exhibition Opening

Friday, 24 January 2020, 6 pm

6.15 pm Words of welcome by Simona Ciuccio, Curator of the Collection, Aargauer Kunsthaus; introduction by Bettina Mühlebach, Assistant Curator, Aargauer Kunsthaus. Followed by a reception in the foyer.

5 - 6 pm Preview for sponsors and members of the Aargau Art Association

6 - 8 pm Children's Opening. Meet at the studio downstairs at 6 pm

CARAVAN in Conversation

Sunday, 22 March 2020, 3 pm

In his work Dominic Michel is often concerned with the social relevance of music and the way it can change over time. In reference to the 1930 opera *We Are Building a City* by Paul Hindemith, the discussion focuses on possible shifts in meaning depending on the context in which the work is performed. Michel talks to Ingo Niermann, author, and Bettina Mühlebach, Assistant Curator, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau.

Images for the Media

Images are available for downloading on our website www.aargauerkunsthau.ch> Media. Please consider the copyright.

Opening Hours

Tue - Sun: 10 am - 5 pm; Thu: 10 am - 8 pm

Holiday Opening Hours

Open 10 am - 5 pm: Ascension Day 21.5., Whitsun 31.5., Whit-Monday 1.6., Eve of Maienzug 2.7., Maienzug 3.7.

For additional information please contact:

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