

The Visitors

Caroline Mesquita

Curated by Elise Lammer

16 June - 27 August 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday 15 June 2017, 6pm



For her exhibition at SALTS, her first institutional solo exhibition in Switzerland, Caroline Mesquita created a new series of life-size metallic artifacts, which are the sculptural elements of the new film she is presenting. Outside, most part of the front facade is concealed by the back of a surreal leisure trailer, which seems to have been parked inside the exhibition space. Working mostly with steel, copper and brass, since 2013 Mesquita has been developing a series of life-size anthropomorphic sculptures evolving over the course of varied fictional scenarios.

Like anonymous bodies, those figures spark an intimate and physical interaction with the viewer, potentially shifting the relationship between subject and object. Each of Mesquita's exhibition can be watched as one act of a long theatre play, allowing the artist to stage a moment in the life of objects when those are not instrumentalised or manipulated by humans. Questioning the inherent anthropocentrism of all human perspectives, the artist suggests that objects exist independently of our perception.

Entering the space through the side door, the visitor discovers three life-size steel motorbikes. Somewhere between Western trail bikes and space ships, those are in fact life-size steel and resin sculptures. Carefully crafted after famous sci-fi models, the bikes seem to have been parked or abandoned in a hurry. They lead to a second room, precisely where the caravan was parked. Projected inside the back of the trailer, *The Visitors* (2017) is a stop-motion video telling the story of some of Mesquita's steel brass figures, while they "visit" an archetypal Western middle-class family in their front garden. In a hot summer afternoon, the human protagonists lazily fall asleep, leaving the way clear for the visitors to temporarily take advantage of the situation and play with their apathetic bodies. Arriving by motorbikes, a herd of anonymous steel brass characters invade the garden and perform a series of enigmatic actions on their subjects. Turning around our expectations, the humans become objects to be touched, teased, caressed, poked and fiddled with.

Caroline Mesquita (born in 1989 in Brest, France) lives and works in Paris, where she graduated from École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 2013. Solo exhibitions include *The Ballad*, Fondation Ricard, Paris in 2017 (curated by Martha Kirzenbaum); *Pink everywhere*, Kunstverein Langenhagen, Germany; *Jupiter Artland*, Edinburgh, Scotland, 2016; *Camping*, Union Pacific, London, 2015; *Les Bains-Douches*, Alençon, France, 2014, and *1m3*, Lausanne, Switzerland, 2013. Group exhibitions include *COOL MEMORIES*, Occidental Temporary, Villejuif, 2016; *Europe, Europe*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway 2014; *The Space Between Us*, Fahrenheit, Los Angeles, 2014; *Memory Palaces*, Carlier-Gebauer, Berlin, 2014; *La Vie Matérielle*, 15ème Prix Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris, 2013; and *Rob Pruitt's Flea Market*, Monnaie de Paris, Paris, 2012. Mesquita attended the Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles in the spring of 2014.

SALTS would like to thank Swisslos-Fonds Basel-Landschaft, Fondation Nestlé pour l'Art, Migros Kulturprozent, Roldenfund Stiftung and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia for the generous support.

The artist would like to thank Jimmy Scour, Pauline Huon, Rémi Gaubert, Iwan Coïc, Hugo Mahieu, Christine Corlosquet, Roger Kermarrec, Jean-Luc Simon, Pascal Le Guevel.



SALTS
Hauptstrasse 12
CH-4127 Birsfelden
info@salts.ch
+41 61 311 73 75