

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Stephan Balkenhol
07 Feb – 28 Mar 2020
Opening: Thursday, 06 Feb 2020, 7 – 9 PM
The artist is present.



Stephan Balkenhol, Mouse Man, 2020, 29,7 x 21 cm, Watercolour on Paper.

After more than thirty years of collaboration with Stephan Balkenhol, it is a great pleasure to present the artist's twentieth exhibition at Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle.

Stephan Balkenhol is best-known—aside from his bronze sculptures in public spaces around the world—for his virtuosic wood sculptures worked from a single piece of wood. A chainsaw first gives the trunk a rough outline, then chisel and mallet do the precision work carving out the figures. Finally, a carefully applied layer of paint breathes life into them. Try as you might to catch their glance, they are floating on a different level. The delicately rendered facial features do not give any clues about the figures' rough beginnings. Only the base and the surfaces of individual body parts bear witness to the energetic work process. It, in turn, was preceded by hand-drawn sketches of the subjects.

Stephan Balkenhol is a gifted illustrator. Drawing is his language without words, telling many stories. First ideas are sketched out, contours determined, some parts detailed in watercolor. Portraits are made with charcoal, the loose flow yielding images that also tend to look inward. No joy, no pain can be extracted from these faces; they remain open to interpretation, and the viewer is caught by making a similarly expressionless, contemplative face.

The human being is always at the center of Stephan Balkenhol's work and is given a twist in his famous hybrid creatures—sculptures pointing to the animal in us: the Hare Man, the Ant Man, the Poodle Lady, the Rooster Man, the Lion Man, or the busy Mouse Man. There is no shortage of subject matter and enough humor in Stephan Balkenhol's oeuvre. We look forward to presenting the artist's new drawings, sculptures, and hybrid creatures.

Stephan Balkenhol's works have been shown around the globe in numerous international exhibitions and are now part of many museum collections. 2020 will see solo presentations at Museum Jorn in Silkeborg, Denmark, and at Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg, Germany.

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