



Katinka Bock, *Winterchamäleon (Mantel)*. H. 150 cm. Coat, copper dust, salt. 2016.

PALAEOLITHIC TO CONTEMP

A Joint Project by Jocelyn Wolff and

Opening: Tuesday,
Wednesday-Friday, 14 -
Saturday, 17 Jun

Venue: Gallery Cahn,

Most of the artists whom I work with look at and analyse archaeological objects, tools, funerary objects and works of art (categories that often blend together in the eyes of the contemporary beholder). For them, the field of archaeology is equally a source of inspiration and a critical tool, and they use it to situate themselves more consciously in their own time, suspended as they are in a vertiginous genealogy of forms. The world of archaeology is parallel to and consubstantial with that

of art history, and the question of the artist, or of authorship, if you prefer, is constantly posed. When Jean-David Cahn invited me to work with Katinka Bock, Guillaume Leblon and Francisco Tropa on an exhibition in his gallery at Malzgasse in Basel, I immediately accepted as it presented an opportunity to extend the exercise in relational contrasting between contemporary artworks and archaeological objects that we first envisaged for the joint exhibition staged at the Brussels

Independent in 2016. Minimalist, rough and refined at the same time, the gallery at Malzgasse is a perfect showcase for an exhibition bringing together the inquiry of these three sculptors, who develop both conceptual discourse (the process, the deconstruction of the image...) and expertly play with the choice and combination of materials.

Jocelyn Wolff

ORARY – ICONS AND TOOLS

d Jean-David Cahn during Art Basel

13 June, 8-10 p.m.

16 June, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

e, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Malzgasse 23, Basel

Art visualizes what counts ultimately. Thus a work of art has the power to move us, even if thousands of years have passed since its creation, as is the case with ancient art, or it employs an artist's own highly personal idiom, as is typical of contemporary art. As works that derive their formal beauty from their function and that were not created as works of art as such, prehistoric artefacts, in particular, rely on the gaze of the beholder to become art. But the viewer also plays a crucial role in relation to those works of contemporary art that wish to be understood as the utterance or manifesto of one particular individual. The viewer must acquiesce to the absolute freedom of expression that is a defining characteristic of all contemporary art. Everything is allowed; there is no standardizing based on social norms; yet despite the boundlessness of art, it can still be comprehended. This capacity of the beholder to per-

ceive art as art, indeed to generate art through the act of perceiving it as such, is a fascinating phenomenon! It is also what inspired me to embark on this project with Jocelyn Wolff. As a continuation of the conceptual work of our joint show at the Brussels Independent 2016, which incidentally aroused considerable interest among both visitors and media alike, it is premised on the notion of dialogue between works of ancient art and the cutting-edge contemporary art displayed alongside them. What is new is that this time, we have ventured deep into the realms of prehistory, far beyond the well-trodden ground of historically documented civilizations and periods. The oldest object shown here was made an astonishing 200,000 years ago! What happens when such an artefact from the dawn of humanity is brought face to face with a work created just a few months ago? What does such an encounter tell us about what it means

to be human – and about our true selves? Jocelyn Wolff and I selected works by Katinka Bock, Francisco Tropa, and Guillaume Leblon for this visual experiment. All three artists take a very haptic approach to their materials and in this respect are similar to the artists and craftsmen of Antiquity and prehistory. Unlike their ancient forebears, however, they also like to avail themselves of alienating effects, as does Francisco Tropa, for example, when he reproduces pebbles in bronze, or Katinka Bock, when she creates a sculpture out of a winter coat, copper dust, and salt. I am very much looking forward to working together with Jocelyn Wolff again and with the artists he represents, and am delighted to have this opportunity of sharing this exciting project with you.

Jean-David Cahn



Upper Paleolithic Period, *Head of an Animal*. H. 8 cm. Coarse-grained stone. Ca. 40000-12000 B.C.