

## **Kaspar Müller**

Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich  
14.10. – 26.11.2016

*August 18, 2016, email: (...) I feel like an animal trainer who is balancing the control over proverbs and kitchen truisms, in order to make a feat out of it – but the trick is not the act itself but the dressage that keeps a lid on everything.*

Ordered and set  
by Tenzing Barshee

Dozens of bicycles are parked in the gallery. They were put there by the artist and arranged in groups on the occasion of his second solo show at Galerie Francesca Pia. Among them are new and older bicycles, e.g. racing bikes, mountain bikes and a tandem. It looks like when somebody is having a party in their shared flat and the courtyard suddenly gets blocked. The recognition value of such figures repeats itself: the broken chained bicycle, the unicycle leaned against the wall, etc. These cycles imply the possibility of movement or escape.

This exhibition not only evokes the image of mobility, but also that of a second-hand market of objects, and, more importantly, of ideas: a database of signs. A recurring motif of the artist, the metaphor of computer files says that everything could be compressed to its symbolic essence. Behind this lies the intention of the artist to overlie, chain and wrap these signs into a pseudo-logical network. However, this system doesn't suggest an allegorical reading, instead, the artist stages the symbol as a hieroglyph.

Nevertheless, we should state the obvious qualities that inhere in these things: the bicycle is an emancipatory tool of modernity, a milestone in collective mobility. It accelerates one's movement through the city, which allows the pedaling individual to indulge in the illusion that by physically carving out a territory, he or she could appropriate this territory. It is a means in a process of appropriation and tenure, yet behaves in such an unpretentious way, camouflaging itself as a harmless, friendly and ecological-reasonable object, a tiny Trojan horse on wheels. These bikes are populated with antiquities, junk and knick-knacks, that date from the nineties back to the Roman Empire.

The objects added to the bicycles appear unbearably private, although they are not at all special or precious. They were ordered on the Internet or found at flea markets. Extracted from meaningful space and context, they correlate with the bicycles, as both groups of works mark the absence of the subject who could have had a relationship with these objects. All this junk has been abandoned. In the gallery these things confidently reclaim their space, putting our attachment to goods and what sentiments go along with them in a critical light. If these objects are the waste of our civilization, then we humans constitute the negative imprint.

Above the bicycles and bits and pieces are stretched proverbs in capital letters that are up to five meters high. These proverbs look like ads in the gallery space. But, content-wise, these phrases act inversely: instead of a promise they constitute a refusal. A rejection of uniqueness.