

METRO PICTURES

“Building on the Run: Judith Hopf at Kunst-Werke in Berlin,” *DB-ArtMag.com* (April 2018).

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Judith Hopf, *Birne*, 2018. Installation view KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

For Judith Hopf, making art means doing something “that doesn’t put you in a bad mood.” The artist’s laconic humor can also be felt in the exhibition *Stepping Stairs*. Surprisingly, it is the first comprehensive show of the documenta participant in her home city Berlin. In several exhibition rooms of KW Institute for Contemporary Art, visitors encounter her *Laptop Men*—figures made of folded sheet steel who are fused with their laptops. As in Hopf’s drawing series *Waiting Laptop* from the Deutsche Bank Collection, man and machine are an indissoluble unit here too. We instantly recognize ourselves in the standing or lying *Laptop Men*, who are perhaps in the process of checking their Facebook account or streaming their favorite series.

While when seen from the side the steel sculptures resemble thin stickmen, Hopf’s brick works are much more corporeal. Oversized hands wave at the viewer, and next to them there are giant pears and a soccer ball. Everything was milled from massive masonry. The wonderfully absurd objects look like relics from an unsuccessful competition for art in public spaces. The two video works boast similar humor: *Lily’s Laptop* shows an au-pair girl using the absence of her guest family as an opportunity to find out whether laptops can swim. For this experiment, she nonchalantly fills the entire apartment with water. *Out*, meanwhile, is devoted to John Hejduk’s Kreuzberg Tower. The building with its striking balcony roofs is a popular destination for architecture enthusiasts. In Hopf’s video, it is tired of being stared at: Suddenly it grows feet and the high-rise leaves its usual spot. A few of the balcony roofs even made it to the Kunst-Werke’s courtyard, where they adorn two windows that now suddenly look like eyes. In between there is a door, out of which a red rug peeps; obviously the mouth. In this homage to Hejduk, too, Hopf employs her slapstick humor.