

METRO PICTURES

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Hundemensch, 2018, *Jahr des Hundes* installation view at Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2018.

"Time is a social institution and not a physical reality." —Alan Wilson Watts

In Oliver Laric's works, nothing is still, indeed: for the viewer approaching his practice, the feeling is that of stepping into a known river only to acknowledge that "different and again different waters flow," to echo Heraclitus—as cited by Plato—as quoted by Laric himself.

Coexistence of multiple realities, openness of form, indiscriminate distinction between notions of original and copy, IRL and AFK, an extensive surveying of authorship: all of these shape Laric's infinite universe, one made of mirrors facing each other in an endless loop of reverberations. His cosmos can be described as the reflection of—and on—a relatively new condition in the history of culture, where everything is effortlessly reachable and instantaneously reproducible, everything can be hybridized with everything else, anything is free and unfinished, its potential never entirely fulfilled; a situation that frames the Foucauldian prophecy of "What matter who is speaking?," ultimately embedding the status of a generation that grew up on the internet, and with the internet.

In this conversation, Oliver Laric discusses *Jahr des Hundes* (*Year of the Dog*), currently on view at Kunstverein Braunschweig–Villa Sauber. The show presents *Betweenness* (2018), a video that retraces and reshape the previous works *Untitled* (2014–15, also displayed), *2000 Cliparts* (2010) and *787 Cliparts* (Laric's seminal video from 2006), investigating the concept of fluid transformation within images and forms; *Hundemensch* (2018), a deliberate sculptural translation of Jean Carriès's *Frog-Man* (circa 1890s), expanding on a methodological practice the artist is very accustomed to; and a new five-part series of printed renderings dealing with the idea of versioning something that could potentially be (and, ideally, is) concurrently limitless.



o.T., 2014-2015, *Jahr des Hundes* installation view at Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2018.

CHIARA MOIOLI: Let's start with the show's title, *Jahr des Hundes* (*Year of the Dog*), which marks the last year according to the Chinese calendar (February 16, 2018–February 4, 2019). Dogs are a recurrent theme in your work, especially in your latest sculptural series, *Hundemensch* (2018). Where does this interest in the contamination between animals, humans, and objects originate?

OLIVER LARIC: I don't have a clear answer to this. I don't think it has been an interest in animals but an interest in the connectivity of human and nonhuman animals. I've been asked if I identify as "furry," which I could neither deny nor agree to. My fascination is probably with hybridizing moments that result from these encounters.

CM: *Hundemensch* (2018) is a deliberate translation of Jean Carriès's *Frog-Man* of the 1890s. In previous sculptural works, you "limited" your artistic act to scanning and reproducing in toto the chosen subjects, drawn from specific art historical examples, playing with the reconfiguration of materials but not altering their genre. In this new series, you have interpreted a preexisting subject, making a new representation—a fresh version, if you will. Can you talk about the evolution of your working method?

OL: In many of the works I've made over the last years, I did utilize building blocks from others, and quite enjoyed that liberty of a vast library of source material. But there is also a point where my comfort becomes a crutch, so perhaps it's a good point to become more vulnerable. When working with the works of others, I can always point a finger and divert some responsibility. With these more recent works, I feel that there is more to be ashamed about.

CM: In this context, can you expand on the new five-part series of printed renderings (*Intestines*; *Ginseng*; *Polypore*; *Spider Crab*; *Untitled* [all 2018]), bordering sculpture and photography?



Ginseng, 2018.

OL: These are a series of sculptures that, at this point, only exist as renderings. They begin as drawings or photographs that get converted into 3D models, working with different 3D modelers. They are then rendered and put into composition with each other. There is something satisfying about the production of a 3D model that relies on the subjectivity of a rendering process to exist. And I enjoy not having to think about large crates and storage spaces as much.

CM: I'm interested in your collaboration with Ville Haimala of Amnesia Scanner in the making of the soundtrack of *Betweenness* (2018). Can you share some insights into this collaboration?

OL: Ville had previously helped me with the instrumentation of an existing composition, and I wanted to work with him on a soundtrack from scratch. My input was a playlist of songs in a minor key from horror soundtracks, and he responded by writing several compositions, one of which became the soundtrack. I adapted my animations around his song, and then he adapted the song around the animations.



Spider Crab, 2018.

CM: You are best known for having investigated the theme of the artwork's paternity by opening the work to public interaction with the public of the network (by co-founding VVORK [2006], by releasing templates for the users to play with, as with *Touch My Body (Green Screen Version)* [2008], or with the project *Lincoln 3D Scans* [2012-ongoing], to quote a few), and for having written video essays centered on the theme of image reproduction through the analysis of the history of sculpture and film animation (*Versions*, 2009 / 2010 / 2012). To talk about "appropriation" when referring to your practice is redundant, if not brutal, in an era in which the dispersion of images and, content contents and meanings, as well as the erosion of the notion of individual authorship are preponderant. Could you open up about this ethos, how it shaped your mentality, and about your status as an artist today?

OL: This voluntary and involuntary collaboration with others is regular, in particular through the *Lincoln 3D Scans* website. It happens every other day that these scans appear somewhere. There are limited ways for me to try and trace the activity—as, for example, searching specific Instagram hashtags—but more rewarding are the unexpected encounters. I think part of the joy is having a component to my work that I have very little influence over.