



ART MAGAZINE

KONTURA

DECEMBER 2019 YEAR XXVIII PRICE HRK 60

PIERRE BONNARD

We publish a review of the exhibition of the great French painter at the Vienna Kunstforum. Drawing in detail the outlines of his aesthetics and teachings, Jagor Bučan shows us Bonnard as one of the most important artists of the 20th century.

PAGE 18

PETAR DOLIĆ

Anita Ruso conducted an interview with the sculptor who recently unveiled his monument to Vlaho Bukovac in Cavtat.

PAGE 84

REMBRANDT AND VELÁZQUEZ

Marijana Bockovac Droždek wrote about the Amsterdam exhibition of the titans of painting, which in addition to their works, displayed the works of their Baroque contemporaries from Spain and the Netherlands.

PAGE 48

#146

/147



VATROSLAV KULIŠ
I LOVE PAINTING THAT
HAS WELL-FED STROKES, A
GOURMET DECADENCE

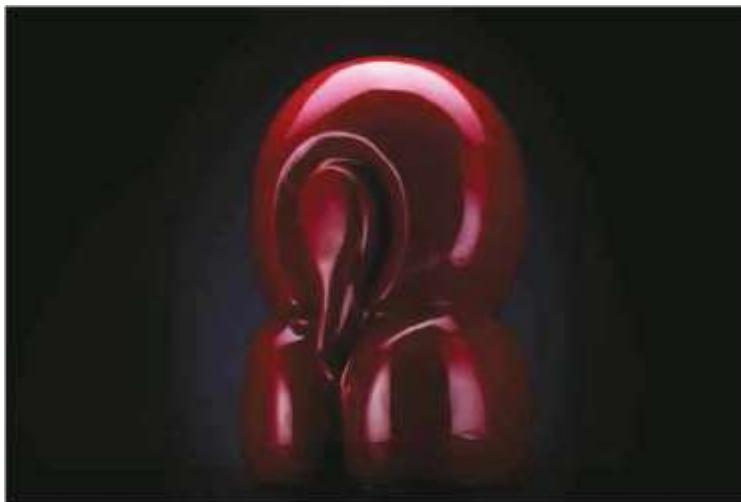
Page 6

AXEL BECKER

A SCULPTOR IN HIS ELEMENT

MATEA BILOGRIVIĆ
PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM THE ARTIST'S ARCHIVES

This artist's works have recently been exhibited in neighboring Slovenia at the Exhibition 3D in Bogenšperk Castle. In November 2019, an exhibition opened in Atelier A. in Wiel der Stadt, and in February 2020 Becker will hold an exhibition at the Croatian Consulate in Stuttgart

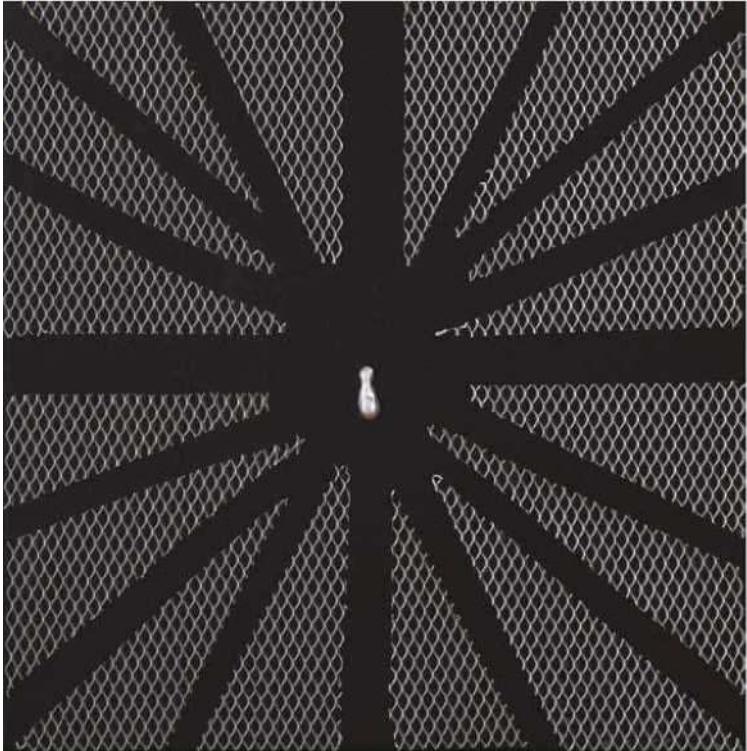


BEGINNING-RED
coloured fibreglas,
lacquered (front)
73 X 53 cm

AXEL BECKER The German artist was born on 15th December 1965 in Frankfurt. Although he has a degree in economics and has no formal art education, he has been involved in art for over 20 years, and has presented his work at several group and solo exhibitions, both in Germany and abroad.

HE INTRODUCED HIMSELF to the Croatian audience for the first time in 2013 at the Alvona Labin Gallery with an exhibition titled

Time for vine in which the "taste created by the encounter of palates and wines Becker portrays through the associative role of colour (the red colour of Teran, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Burgundy or the yellow-gold Malvasia, white or gray Pinot, white Muscat etc.), through symbolism and, above all, tendency to ultimately eliminate visual elements.¹ He has also exhibited his works at this year's Art Fair in Zagreb from



SCREAM 30 x
30 cm acrylic,
metal, canvas

9th to 13th October 2019, at which he won the 3rd prize for his sculpture *Beginning*.

AXEL BECKER'S PAINTING is "clever blend of modernism, post avant-garde art practice, painting that comes out from its two-dimensionality and delves into the spectrum of sculpture. It is a sort of assemblage with the experience of Arman, Lucio Fontana and Yves Klein, which will in the near future certainly result in even bolder reductionist solutions and even more pronounced, but no less minimalist chords within a given score.

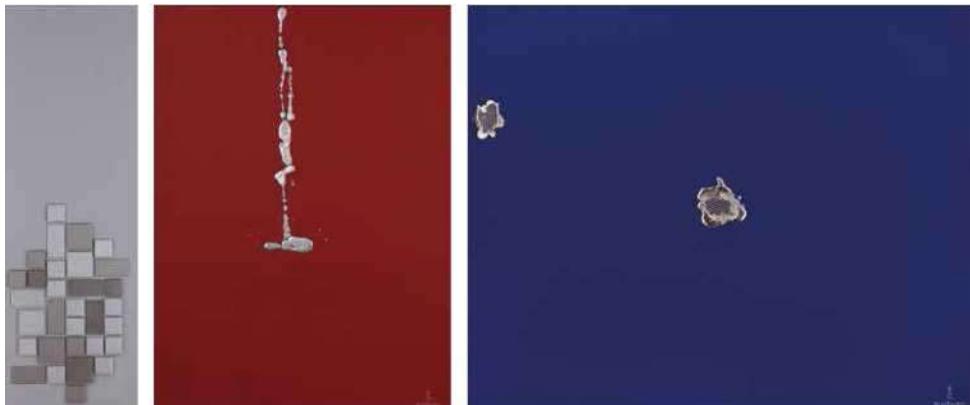
(...) BECKER BELONGS to the offspring of a famous generation of painters whose "animal", ludic act of painting broke all ties with the past and literally "desecrated" all that was known in the past as "fine arts." It was the final

clash

of attitudes and simultaneously the greatest fateful era of the act of liberation in the context of art history, known as expressionism. It was that precise lesson that further influenced the followers and contemporaries of other directions such as DADA, futurism, surrealism, and ultimately minimalism." (Vedran Šilipetar)

MUCH OF BECKER'S OEUVE is made of the cycle *Elements* in which the works are inspired by Chinese philosophy of the five basic elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, water. This cycle was presented by the author at exhibitions in Frankfurt (The fourth element - Metal, 2017; *Elements*, 2018) and Montreal (*Elements*, 2019). The exhibition *Elements* focuses on pure monochrome works in blue, black, burgundy, yellow, orange and pearl: Cartesian 'clear and expressive' basic mosaic elements of broad artistic discourse. Axel Becker is in love with

¹ Vedran Šilipetar, catalog of the exhibition *Time for wine, Gahnja* Alvena Labin, 2013



evocation and synthesis: *necessaria tantum*, nothing more than necessary in his works, *never beyond* in his paintings. In fact, he directs his minimalist observation to a series of strict monochromes that are absolute in themselves (more or less large, rectangular or square canvases), which are then assembled together or on which metals melt like 'holes' that secretly wink at Alberto Burri or like 'cuts' of Fontana's spatialist origin. These metal incrustations 'externally' reflect virtual light beams, affecting the monochromatic 'interior' of the painting; magmatic sediments that 'open' and 'unveil' 'the other side' of the painting by means of significant flashes that unite the uniform background of the canvas with luminous Nature that is deprived of a recognizable form (significantly, perhaps, the unreachable *beyond*). It seems as if these simple and 'scarce' minimalist paintings contain a lifelong experience." (Giampaolo Trotta)

"THE EFFECT OF THESE COMPOSITE painting-objects on the one hand is visually interesting, while on the other it certainly requires further elaboration with less design and decorative elements. This *pro futuro* is likely to announce the discovery of the space of freedom beyond rigidly imposed exactness and exclusively central setting. Consequently, it can be presumed that the author will find the *modus operandi* even at the price of liberation of materiality, i.e., that he will incline to the autonomy of both relief and freestanding objects, then metal reliefs and sculptures." (Gorka Ostojić Cvajner)

IN AXEL'S WORKS WE do not in fact find a 'radical' or extreme, brilliant and sunny view at the monochrome, but the monochrome itself is seen in aggregations (in 'fragments' or 'pieces'), or as a background, precisely due to the overlying presence of metal incrustations, drifting continents that cool their magma and reintroduce an

abstract-figurative visionary ('abstract - concrete' as Lionello Venturi would probably say) which is strange to Klein, a visceral subjective and descriptive emotionality, typical of the Western world, returned to us with intriguing technical skill. Undoubtedly, in the foundations of these Becker's experiences lie two main factors: minimalism and lyrical and symbolic evocation.

ELEMENTS is the title of his exhibition. Elements of a whole, i.e., components, are fundamental parts that constitute a whole through their aggregation, but also chemical elements of the Periodic Table, gaseous, liquid and solid (such as, in order of increasing atomic number or number of protons, iron, copper, silver, tin, gold, mercury and lead, known since ancient times). As this term, therefore, we can understand both the different monochrome and serial 'mosaic elements' or 'pieces' that constitute various possible aggregations, as in the mechanistic DNA chain of Life, and the various metallic 'elements' that impress a vibrating 'soul' into cold and inert matter, where the 'experimenter' Axel plays the role of a modern alchemist in search of 'his' philosopher's stone which transforms plain metals into gold and silver, i.e., transforms materiality into spirit." (Giampaolo Trotta) THIS ARTIST'S WORKS have recently been exhibited in neighboring Slovenia at the Exhibition 3D in Bogenšperk Castle. An exhibition was opened in November 2019 at the Atelier A. in Wiel derStadt and in February 2020, Becker will hold an exhibition at the Croatian Consulate in Stuttgart.

K

PATCH 100 x 80 cm
acrylic, zinc, canvas

middle:
WATERFALL RED
60x80cm acrylic,
zinc, canvas

left:
WINTER
40 x 120 cm acrylic,
canvas