

PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT

25 January – 18 March 2020

Reception: Saturday, 25 January 2020 at 5 pm

Artist Talk: 5.30 pm

For the first time since his widely acclaimed exhibition in the Vienna Secession in 2008, **PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT** is exhibiting in an Austrian gallery. The primary elements in his thinking are theories and discourse on spatial and audio-visual perception and the resulting research in sound and film. His paintings are static representations of motion, time and spatiality. This links him with Étienne-Jules Marey, French physiologist, doctor and researcher, who in 1872 first attempted to record movements graphically on light-sensitive paper, and thus to visualise the temporal components of motion sequences. With the aid of recording instruments, these were traced on the paper as white lines on a black ground: this was the birth of chronophotography, predecessor of the moving picture, known as film. Inspired by Marey's book *La machine animal* (1873), Californian Governor Leland Stanford hired self-taught photographer Eadweard Muybridge to produce studies of motion sequences with special chronographic cameras. The influence of these first motion studies of 1878 by Muybridge/Marey on subsequent generations of artists is still undiminished, having inspired Marcel Duchamp's *Nude descending a Staircase, no. 2*, Francis Bacon as well as special-effects artists in the film industry (Tim Macmillan, *Matrix*). **PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT**'s works *Forcing Meaning to the Edge* are precisely composed arrangements of 30 blue and 30 black lines painted with a brush on a shaped canvas. By means of optical illusion, they appear three-dimensional.

The works *Fragments for a script* refer to Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's film project *Dynamics of the Metropolis* (1925/26), in which image and text are separated by means of mobile graphic elements. The result is a typographic image, fragments of which **PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT** extracts to form iron wall objects. Placed in relation to one another in the gallery, these form a visual link connecting the four walls, at the same time easing the flow of the exhibition and acting as places for the viewer's eye to pause, in order to prepare for new visual experiences. The wall objects resemble one another: their metallic elements are variously combined within the sculptures, and look rather like mechanical machines or tools. Removed from their original context, the fragments assume abstract forms. This brings us full circle to Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's *Dynamics of the Metropolis*, which in 1925 anticipated that information would have to be organised within a geometrical system in order to function like a visual language legible to both human beings and machines.

Shown in a black box at the rear of the gallery is **PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT**'s film *Solides*, in which the main feature is a replica of the stellated tetrahedron (*stella octangula*) which decorates André Breton's gravestone in the Cimetière des Batignolles in Paris. The artist was fascinated by this star-shaped object consisting of eight tiny three-sided pyramids: $8 \times 3 = 24$ – a magic number for **PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT**. 24 frames per second make a still image into a fluent sequence of images. The digitalised 16mm film *Solides* shows the edges, corners and planes of the stellated tetrahedron in close-up, thus citing not only the five Platonic solids (tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron, icosahedron) but also the medium of film itself.

On the upper floor of the gallery, two works (*Pause, Pause double*) resemble an impenetrable labyrinth. Viewers assume that if their eye follows the black beams painted alternately on a white ground, they will arrive at the centre of the maze – but the lines take them back to the starting-point. **PHILIPPE DECRAUZAT** says: "I like to play around with representing motion and volume", thus capturing the essence of what he does.

Salzburg, January 2020

Katja Mittendorfer