

VINCENT SZAREK

COCA-COLA COWBOY

Opening on 11 May 2016 at 6 p.m.  
11 May – 25 June 2016

In his works **VINCENT SZAREK** (\*1973 Rhode Island, USA) unites minimalist art with American popular culture. While he was studying at the renowned Rhode Island School of Design **VINCENT SZAREK** worked in a body shop which made him well acquainted with the world of automobiles, their construction materials and production techniques. The skills he thereby acquired have since then been applied to his artistic creativity. Glass fibre, aluminium, chrome and varnish are the materials with which **VINCENT SZAREK** creates his works. Each individual part created by hand in the studio is based on drawings which contain instructions and diagrams for the production. Automated production processes are of no importance; **VINCENT SZAREK** leaves only metal casting and chrome laminating to professionals.

On the basis of his reflective wall and floor objects **VINCENT SZAREK** analyses the phenomenon of the individualisation of mass production. In our exhibition an example of this is the motif of the *Playboy Bunnies*, which are displayed two-dimensionally on posters, T-shirts, coffee cups and other merchandise articles. **VINCENT SZAREK** transforms it into the third dimension, creates a sculpture of white, red and blue synthetic resin, the colours of the American national flag, and calls it *Silly Rabbit*.

**VINCENT SZAREK** enjoys the idea of giving an individual touch to a well-known motif, thereby creating something new. The stylised laurel wreath, on which the work *Best of All* is based, is also a well-known element of design: it is an integrated part of the logo of Cadillac cars. In Greek antiquity the laurel wreath was used to decorate outstanding poets and athletes; in Rome successful field commanders wearing a laurel wreath marched to the Temple of Jupiter. In **VINCENT SZAREK**'s work the wreath of victory becomes a chrome-plated monumental art object (120 cm in diameter).

Typical symbols from the time of the American gold rush on the West Coast such as the sparkling horseshoe, the giant cactus and the skull of a bull oscillating in dark colours of the rainbow reflect the artist's affinity with the Wild West. The chrome-coated head of a white-headed eagle, the bird on the American coat of arms, is **VINCENT SZAREK**'s homage to his homeland: "a trophy for my America" as he says. Besides the sculptures created in recent weeks in the artist's studio in Los Angeles, our exhibition also includes seven wall objects which are on show for the first time in Austria: four canvases coated with white synthetic resin radiate tranquillity and contemplation, three tondi shimmer and sparkle in the colours of the rainbow: minimal painting at its best!

Salzburg, April 2016

Katja Mittendorfer