



Rosa Aurora Rosa

An exhibition by Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel
January 21 - March 11, 2018

The work of Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel violates the pre-established codes of sculpture and features a physical reengagement with materials and processes, including embroidery, weaving, ceramics, wood and stone carving. A strong awareness surrounding craftsmanship and tradition allows the artists to continuously expand their medium and its reach. The display of erudition and joyful anarchy present in their work is offset by the many ways in which the used references glance back at the past, casting an ironic shadow on the present.

A few things I know about Pompeii: As a city it seems to have been oriented to a warm consideration of all sensual matters. Numerous brothels and bathhouses were found during the excavations, all decorated with tantalizing erotic murals. Among the human figures preserved under the layers of volcanic ash there is a couple, closely curled up together. Recent scans and DNA tests reveal that the two figures are male, giving cause to speculations about the nature of their eternal embrace. All Pompeii figures have become one with the ruins that were once their homes. Encapsulated in the same material, it is hard to tell where a body ends and the soil begins. Touch them and they will crumble. Ashes and dust and so forth.

Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel's sustained investigation of ceramic sanitary wares such as bidets, sinks, and soap dishes relates to the traditional craft of manufacturing containers. A physical barrier, for example a stone vase, is created in order to control and contain another amalgamation of matter, like water, that has no other barrier than its own skin.

Rosa Aurora Rosa, or Estremoz Pink, is an impressive marble with varying shades of pink as its background color and with strong veining. Sometimes, the pink can be very bold. In geological terms, it is probably enough to refer to Rosa Portuguese as a limestone of approximately 400 million years old. It is extracted in the area of Alentejo, which consists of a triangle formed by the communities of Vila Viçosa, Estremoz, and Borba.

A vase is not only a depository, it also dispenses. We pour liquid into it (always already revealing a preceding chain of sources pouring out into one another) only to pour it out again. The carefully carved out water taps and showerheads, but also the bidets and the sinks: all runs through them. Though muted by their rocky matter, the works shown here evoke the pulsing rhythm of pouring and emptying. All flows. It's sinks and taps all the way down.

The main aim of figurative sculpture has always been to achieve perfect mimesis: the muscles of the marble wrestler should ripple; the carved Venus' buttocks should be plump. Despite museum regulations, the urge to rub and caress a sculpture is the best proof of success when sculpturally depicting the human form. We all like to be touched, and the best sculptures seem to long for it as much as we do.

The Nudes series reveals the self-awareness of the practice of Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel. These are sculptures at work, showing what on the one hand might be only the beginning, or, on the other hand, the excavation of something longtime finished. Sensuously sleeping ruins, or vital organs piercing through the surface. Paused between being trapped and being freed. Spilling, or being spilled.

The artists in their own words:

On a beach, amongst the pink rocks, black stone blocks. Small pools of clear water between the boulders, Body and skin in contact with the polished surface.

A bathroom.

To extract this incipient monument,

To find this moment again,

A basin, a bathtub, a bidet,

Sculpted out of pink stone.

The glitter from the sand is sparkling.

Sanitary ware — washbasins, bidets, toilets, and a bathtub —

Are carved out of a block of pink marble stone.

Smooth, rounded, hollow objects emerge from the material.

The mineral sends these modern furnishings back to a state of nature. In the garden, the monument evokes nude bodies in an idyllic world.

The material and formal intelligence of the artists shows itself once more in *Stone Marquetry with Body, Soap Dispenser and Taps I, II and III*, as well as in *Stone Marquetry with Vase, Soap and Pipe I and II*. The series proves that the flow cannot be held back. In the humorous unraveling of a peaceful domestic still life, not only do liquids start to appear, but also the taps, the dispenser, and the buttocks start to droop, to twist, morph, and melt. These wall-mounted stone plaques suggest fluidity not only of ideas and images, but also of the material itself. A flux of figures passes through the stone. Minerals come to a halt, take shape, and then pour on.

Samuel Saelemakers

Daniel Dewar (b. 1976 in Forest of Dean, UK) lives and works in Brussels, BE.

Grégory Gicquel (b.1975 in Saint-Brieuc, FR) lives and works in Paris, FR.

Dewar & Gicquel have been working as an artist duo since 2003.

Solo exhibitions of their work have been held at Portikus, Frankfurt, DE (2017); Witte de With, Rotterdam, NL (2017); KIOSK, Ghent, BE (2016); Front Desk Apparatus, New York, USA (2015); Musée Rodin, Paris, FR (2014); Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR (2013) and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR (2013 and 2007).

Their work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including at WIELS, Brussels, BE (2017); CAC, Vilnius, LT (2015); Santa Barbara Museum of Art, USA (2013); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, IE (2013); Yokohama Triennale, JP (2011); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, FR (2010); Raven Row, London, UK (2010); CAPC, Bordeaux, FR (2008) and Artists Space, New York, USA (2007).

Dewar & Gicquel are the recipients of the 2012 Prix Marcel Duchamp.

Their work is part of the collections of Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, FR; Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain, Genève, CH; Fonds national d'art contemporain, Paris, FR; FRAC Aquitaine, Bordeaux, FR; FRAC Basse-Normandie, Caen, FR, FRAC Pays De La Loire, Carquefou, FR, FRAC Corse, Corte, FR.

Rosa Aurora Rosa is Dewar & Gicquel's first exhibition at C L E A R I N G.