



SCULPTURES

An exhibition of works by **Bruno Gironcoli**

May 13 - June 23, 2019

C L E A R I N G Brooklyn

C L E A R I N G is pleased to present *SCULPTURES*, the first solo exhibition of Bruno Gironcoli's (1936-2010) sculptural works in the United States coinciding with a presentation of the artist's drawings in *WORKS ON PAPER* at C L E A R I N G Upper East Side. The four works on display span more than 20 years of sculptural practice by one of the most important Austrian artists of his generation.

Since the early 1960's Gironcoli transformed his surrealist visions into monumental, polished sculptures cast in aluminum with utmost precision. "Theatrically", to use the artist's own words, the works stage an invented symbolic repertoire, recombining and reproducing expressions that appear at once futuristic and archaeological. On these stages or altars, the inorganic merges with the organic, figurative elements – embryos, human figures, objects of everyday culture such as toilets, spoons, brooms and fauna – merge with each other and with machinic structures. Theatricality, too, resonates in his play of masquerade of humanoid and human-like beings, in which the human is menacingly close to a machine, and life is in close proximity to death.

Gironcoli's practice was impacted by witnessing the atrocities of WWII and an environment of rapid social changes in post-fascist Europe with its unraveling capitalist and global economies. In the 1950's the artist was trained as a gold-, silver-, and coppersmith, and later studied painting. He became head of the sculpture department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, where he taught the likes of Franz West, Ugo Rondinone and Hans Schabus. During that time Gironcoli dabbled with communism though he stayed suspicious of any ideology. His phantasmological vocabulary was a product of a quest to understand a confused human nature, its desire for subjugation and the disciplinarian of its bodies, and was often rooted in the local context, evident in spikes surrounding the "Yellow Maria" or edelweiss flowers, associated with traditionalist Austrian nationality. *Untitled* (1975-76), the "Yellow Madonna", is an altar to the quotidian alienated labor and the relentless overproduction of consumer culture peaking in Catholic kitsch.

Gironcoli rigorously positioned himself outside of the contemporary canon and avoided its motifs. His eclectic yet cohesive oeuvre is a post-modern pastiche that borrows from and subverts futurism to pop and is simultaneously existentialist and humorous.

Text by Franziska Sophie Wildfoerster

The exhibition was organized in collaboration with The Bruno Gironcoli Estate.

Bruno Gironcoli (1936, Villach Carinthia, AT - 2010, Vienna, AT) is considered one of the most prominent Austrian artists of the twentieth century.

Solo exhibitions have been held at MUMOK, Vienna; MAMCO, Geneva; Museum Belvedere, Vienna; MAK, Vienna and C L E A R I N G, Brussels amongst others. Prototypes for a New Species is currently on view at the SCHIRN, Frankfurt. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Generali Foundation, Vienna; MAC's Grand Hornu, Mons; MUMOK, Vienna; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Lyon Biennale; etc.

In 2003, he represented Austria at the Venice Biennale, curated by Kasper König.

His work is part of the collection of MoMA, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; MAMCO, Geneva; Lehnbachhaus, Munich; Generali Foundation, Vienna; Belvedere Museum, Vienna; Gironcoli Museum, Herberstein; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

There are two museums dedicated to his work: Gironcoli Museum, Herberstein and the Gironcoli Kristall, Strabag Kunstforum, Vienna.