

3pigs

Pre-interview: Nik Nowak



by [Adela Lovric](#)

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We caught up with the young & talented Nik Nowak and his work-in-progress just before the opening of his exhibition „TORQUE: The Moment of Turning“ at Cruise & Callas. The awarded Szene-Liebling, renowned for his monumental sonic installations and sound objects, decided to make a slight turn and set up an exhibition with drawings only – his first show of this kind, and the most intimate so far.

Although going off the beaten path, this exhibition collects pieces that are strongly linked to his earlier, widely acclaimed work. The result is a visually striking compilation of palimpsests that reveal some unseen layers of the artist's practice.

Could you explain the title of the show?

'Torque' is the moment of turning. The main pieces in the show are made with track vehicles. The drawings are made by the turning of the heavy caterpillar on the surface - the pressure and the weight are scratching through layers.

For the first time now, you are exhibiting exclusively drawings. What is the difference between this exhibition and your previous shows with sound objects?



It is totally different. I have never really made a show with drawings only; the focus was always on sculptures and sound installations. This is the first one where I leave all that away. Drawing has ever been the base ground for my work, from where things develop. A very small drawing on paper can be a formulation that in the end leads to a monumental installation. For me it is special because it was until now almost a hidden studio thing, and now it is the birth.

Why did you decide to change the focus? How does this show relate to your previous work?

Most of my older works had these aspects of layers and cutting through. I was doing this practice over the years since university, where I was actually starting with drawing and painting. Later through music I began building sound systems, which were more of a machinery for my music that turned into a self-standing idea of sculpture. But the drawing, especially the method of layering and cutting through, was a constant practice, I just did not know what it was about. After a while, I found out it also had a lot to do with my music, layering sound and opening doors to certain memories. The music was always related to certain times or issues. I found out that this kind of scratching through, this method of drawing has a similar idea behind it, of forgetting and remembering. Now I was able to show these pieces with the same aspect in all the different works. In the early drawings I also used motifs, I did figurative wall drawings, but it turned out that it was always actually the layering that was interesting.

Have you encountered any surprises or new discoveries while setting up this show?



There is nothing new, it is something that I always wanted to do. Even if some pieces are quite physical and loud, for me drawing is generally abstract and intimate. I am doing this since I was little. It feels quite easy, quite normal. With big installations every installation is kind of a breakthrough technically. The nice thing about the drawings is that they are quite autonomous, they are finished, they are what they are, and

now I just have to hang them, arrange, curate. The difference to all wall drawings that I made before the installations is that they have a lot of reverberation with the space and the context. Before I would have shown any paintings or drawings, I would have gone to the space and make a wall drawing that is related to the space and the architecture.

How do you feel about openings – and this opening in particular?

Depends. This one is for me exciting. It is quite personal; I show an intimate body of work that I have not shown yet. Some openings... I think I actually do not need to go to. Others... I curated an exhibition called „Booster - Art Sound Machine“ where I invited around 40 artists. It was all about mobile sound sculptures. There was a long term research made about it, and when I was finally able to bring artists together from all over the world, it was super exciting, something like fulfilling a dream. I was doing that show in collaboration with Marta Herford, and through them I was able to make a project that was unforgettable. That opening was one of the most beautiful situations of the last year. So, it can be very different. If the show has a personal meaning, the opening is a sort of relief.

What were you aiming for with this exhibition? Is it a turning point, as the title might suggest?



This exhibition is very specific for me because I came to Kirstin Strunz, owner of the gallery, thinking that she might be interested in showing my drawings. I have never exhibited them separate from the sculptural work, which had a lot of media attention, so we both thought – ok, let's do that show. It had to do with her concept of the gallery, and I really thought it was important to show this wider body of work that is related to the sound sculptures. I had this need, I felt like this is really necessary to convey this whole context.

Any plans for the future you would like to share with us?

Hopefully releasing a record with my band [Schockglätze](#). We are almost there.

There is also an opening in Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien. The show is called „Boys and their toys“ and it is about omnipresence of military - also in the arts. (Opening March 6, 2015)

From a young artist to a young artist:

Take your time.

I took my time to show these drawings.

*„TORQUE: The Moment of Turning“
Opening: 27.02 19h @ Cruise & Callas
On view until 11.04*