

JORGE MACCHI***Drift Bottles***

October 31 - December 19, 2020

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to present a new group of works by Argentinean artist Jorge Macchi (*1963 Buenos Aires, Argentina; lives and works there) in the gallery's project space. In his exhibitions, Jorge Macchi creates a poetic world of paradoxes and metamorphoses that sensitize the viewer to the phenomena of supposedly banal constants of our everyday life. Different media, such as drawing, text, installation, sculpture, ready-made, photography, collage, cut-outs, prints, architecture, and painting can coexist harmoniously in Macchi's cosmos and are held together formally and content-wise by connecting references and visual codes. The presentation in the gallery, entitled *Drift Bottles*, will tie in with the marine theme of the artist's current installation at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne. On display will be seven handmade wooden ship models in plastic bottles. Each sculpture is unique and available separately.

A drift bottle (also known as a 'floater') is a bottle that contains a document indicating the exact time and place where the bottle was released into the ocean. Once the bottle is recovered, this information is used to determine the circulation of surface water in the ocean. With Macchi, each individual bottle contains a filigree, small ship model instead of a message. Each model was made by an artisan from Buenos Aires. Among the different types of ships are well-known transatlantic passenger steamers, such as the *Titanic*, or the *France*, the historic paddle steamer *Stadt Zürich* (City of Zurich), the sailing frigate *Belle Poule* and the 'cistern' steamship *Hidria segundo* (see invitation card), which in the 1960s served to supply water to merchant ships and fishing boats in the estuary of the Vigo River in Galicia. Individual details, such as the chimney, cabin, railing, and sail mast are precisely worked out with the utmost skill. The wood is hand-painted. The individual bottles are each presented at the same height on a shelf mounted on the wall and can be viewed both from above and from the side. The straight, horizontal line they form is reminiscent of the distant horizon of the sea.

Instead of introducing the wooden ships in glass bottles in the old manner of the 'ship in a bottle', Macchi places them in different plastic mineral water bottles. Each ship is fixed inside the bottle in a small pond made of transparent synthetic resin and thus appears to float in the water. The idea for this work came to the artist last year when he saw a reportage about the great garbage whirl in the Pacific Ocean. With its devastating effects on the environment, sculpture, in particular, has increasingly become a global symbol for harmful waste products in recent years. In the case of Macchi, the juxtaposition of simple plastic with carefully crafted handicrafts made of wood as an organic natural product creates a paradox that is intended to sensitize the viewer to environmental politics and personal responsibility. The ship in the plastic bottle thus becomes a metaphorical carrier of a significant message, just like the scroll in the drift bottle.

For the solo exhibition *La Cathédrale engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral)* at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Macchi created a space-filling sound installation. Inspired by the prelude of the same name by Claude Debussy, the installation refers to the mythical city of Ys, which according to legend sank long ago on the Breton coast in the floods of the sea. The sound is based on the ringing of the bells of Lausanne Cathedral and is triggered by the random movement of the visitor. Just like the bells of the cathedral of Ys, which are said to be still ringing today, the sound seems to come from the depths of the sea. The exhibition is open until November 22.

The work of Jorge Macchi has been exhibited internationally since the mid-1980s. In 2016, the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano MALBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina, presented *Perspectiva*, the first major retrospective in the artist's home town, which continued in 2017 to the Centro de Arte 2 de Mayo CA2M, Madrid, Spain. Further solo exhibitions took place in the City Hall Deinze (2016) and in the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst S.M.A.K., Ghent (2011). Recent important group exhibitions were (selection): *Gasträume 2020*, KIÖR Kunst im öffentlichen Raum, Zurich (2020); Bienalsur, MAR Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (2019); Kathmandu Triennale, Kathmandu (2017); and *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2016). Macchi's works are represented worldwide in collections of the following institutions (selection): Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Daros Latin America Collection, Zurich; MUSAC, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León; Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires; Museo del Barrio, New York; MoMA, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London.

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