

ABRAHAM DAVID CHRISTIAN – THE WAY 道 DER WEG

Duration: June 11 – August 29, 2010

Opens: June 10, 2010, 7 pm.

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For the first time Abraham David Christian is exhibiting in the MKM “HAYAMA_7 : Towers of Wisdom”, a new group of monumental bronze sculptures. Attesting to his intensive research into the intercultural trove of human forms, the works of the two-time documenta participant straddle the boundary between minimalism and sensuality, fragility and force. Spanning seven rooms, Christian’s retrospective in the MKM presents sculptures fashioned from bronze, plaster and paper and a selection of his drawings. The artist (*1952) lives and works in New York, Dusseldorf/Germany and Hayama/Japan.

On his worldwide excursions, Abraham David Christian sets out to explore the traditions of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. His oeuvre is shaped by the experiences gained on his many sojourns and extended trips across several continents, and by his profound understanding of foreign cultures and their forms of expression. According to the art critic Richard Milazzo, his works not only evoke the spirit of Renaissance art and the abstract art of the 20th century Avantgarde (for example, Brancusi, Giacometti or David Smith), but are also redolent of the art from Japan or India.

For the title of the exhibition Abraham David Christian uses the Japanese character for ‘way’. It comprises two elements, and can perhaps be explained as follows: We see a foot, the symbol of a stride, on top of which is mounted a deer head bearing antlers. The stag must first shed the old antlers before a fresh set with new points can start to grow. This image is applied analogously by Abraham David Christian to describe his own modus operandi: As an artist, he continually has to begin again, to re-engage, re-invent and re-create himself – the journey is the destination.

‘The way’ through the exhibition in the Küppersmühle Museum leads us through seven rooms. Each room has its own distinct conception, some are preceded by an introductory sculpture which could be described as a “sentinel”, and which attunes us to what lies within.

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The centre piece of the exhibition is the new series of monumental bronze sculptures: 'HAYAMA_7 : Towers of Wisdom' which the MKM is presenting for the first time. The plaster models for these sculptures originated in the small Japanese town of Hayama, the summer residence of the Japanese royal family, where the artist has maintained a workshop for the past 25 years. A further highlight is the four-tonne bronze 'Interconnected Sculpture'. Despite its ostensibly simple form, this work took three years to complete, by virtue of its considerable technical complexity. This sculpture also exemplifies the modus operandi of the artist: "What is dreamed up by a person can also be translated into reality". To gather new experience for the production of the 'Interconnected Sculpture', Abraham David Christian consulted with a number of experts, including civil and aviation engineers.

Balance and silence run like a leitmotif through the show. "Silence", states Abraham David Christian, "is not only not speaking. But silence must also permeate our 'human beingness'. When this silence has penetrated the inner-most core of a person's being, that which has lain concealed therein reveals itself to him."

In addition to the exhibition, the artist is also represented in the MKM with a collection room, featuring further drawings and small-scale paper sculptures.



Abraham David Christian
HAYAMA_7 : Towers of Wisdom, 2007/09
Photography: Hans-Christian Schink

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