

08 12 2018 —
20 01 2019

Stuart Middleton
Motivation
and Personality

ENGLISH

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Künstlerhaus
Halle für Kunst & Medien
Burgring 2, Graz, Austria
Di–So 10–18h, Do 10–20h

www.km-k.at

The exhibition "Motivation and Personality" of British artist Stuart Middleton (*1987 Crewe, UK, lives in Glasgow) shows an installation which mashes together ideas from animal behavioral science, meat production-line technology and human psychology. Within his site-specific new production throughout the lower exhibition level, the artist creates an experimental, sculptural machinery for Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien. Middleton's full scale model touches the audience not only on the intellectual, but also on the physical level and, following the biology of the ruminant, should even "digest" them.

Stuart Middleton works in a transdisciplinary way. His interventions, which hover between installation and sculpture, are always conceived in relation to other media such as animation, drawing and fiction writing. For his first institutional exhibition in the German-speaking region, the artist has conducted extensive research: The invitation displays a photograph of a piece of pork produced by Middleton, while attending a training for butchery in 2017. This ties in with the installation on the lower exhibition floor of the Künstlerhaus, which is a replica of a "Livestock Handling System" designed by Dr. Temple Grandin, professor of animal science at Colorado State University. The handling system is regarded as progressive in the meat industry

and employs scientific findings from the behavioral psychology of animals in order to conduct the killing as stress-free and anxiety-free as possible.

The layout of the replica "Motivation and Personality" (2018) will use rough measurements taken from an operational slaughterhouse in the United Kingdom.

Designed to exploit the cattle's natural defensive instinct to circle, the architecture of the "Livestock Handling System" gradually funnels the herd into a conveyance of individual beasts. Faithful to this logic, a fragile curving corridor restricts the visitors' access to a pre-defined path, which narrows gradually and eventually permits single file passage only. The entire rudimentary structure, made from wood, is covered with used textiles, primarily clothes and domestic linens, which stem from the artist himself, his friends, family and contributions from the people of Graz. Each garment has been unpicked, flattened out and sewn together again into a new continuous fabric that serves to cut off the viewer completely from the exhibition space, similar to a closed hull. In contrast to the inside of an industrial slaughterhouse of Grandin's design, in which the human scent is being neutralized as not to irritate the animals that are being guided through, the textile insides of Middleton's installation refers to the human corporeality in a sensual manner.

Some of Middleton's earlier works refer to the animal world. The symbolization of human sociology through animals is thereby of special interest to the artist. Thus, "Motivation and Personality" references not only the treatment of livestock, but also the utilization of animals in pedagogic contexts. In the frame of narration and literature, images of animals with human attributes support the early learning process with regard to communal life and serve the domestic/familial education. Evidence is also provided by the title of the installation: "Motivation and Personality" refers to the book of the same name by the American psychologist Abraham Maslow from 1954, in which he deals with the fulfillment and the significance of personal relationships and their psychological and scientific foundations. Maslow's theory is widely criticized on grounds of his ethnocentric, ableist and essentialist ideals and is no longer taken seriously in the world of academic psychology. The print "untitled" (2018) shows two photographs from the publication "Plague on the Cheshire Plains" by Herbert Hughes and John Ormsby Jones from 1969 and constitutes the outset of the exhibition. The lower image shows a family of farmers, who, after the disastrous epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease in the 1960s in England, lead new dairy cows to their farm. The photo above

displays a cattle market in Cheshire in Northwestern England from the same time. The scale of the group of wooden children's furniture "untitled" (2018), made from 200 year old French oak wood, refers as thematic substitute to the childlike qualities of human psychology, its malleability, but also the authorities that form them. The model-like truck "puppet 03" (2018) with integrated doll house and the miniature chicken farm "Poultry Shed" (2018), which, reminiscent of toys, combine the themes of the logistics of livestock handling with infantile learning through play.

The architectural procession ends with the projection of Middleton's newest stop frame animation "Keep Going" (2018). In more than 10.000 photographs, the film displays the slow movements of two seemingly mighty snails, a parent and child, which are finding their way. The form of the snail shell is often used as a metaphor for recurring patterns while in behavioral psychology, spirals often stand for a compulsive disposition. However, this sign suggests that biological patterns exhibit aesthetic regularity, but do not underlie logical systematics. With the snails from "Keep Going" Stuart Middleton stages two creatures as the finale of his model handling system that represent unpredictability, variability and individualism,

due to their biology. At the same time, the slow movements of the animals illustrate the processuality and the time it takes to change personal and public relationships.

1
untitled, 2018

photographic print on paper
29,7 x 42 cm
courtesy the artist

2
untitled, 2018

wood, foam, cotton, paint,
polyester, paper and electronics
5 items, dimensions variable
courtesy the artist

3
Motivation and Personality, 2018

wood, used textiles, electronics
dimensions variable
courtesy the artist

4
puppet 03, 2018

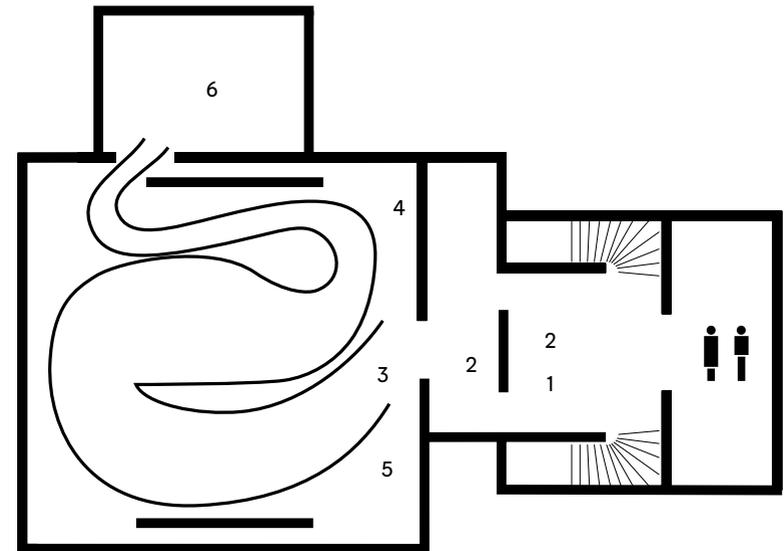
fiberglass, wood, paint, electronics,
metal, plastic and PU foam
50 x 38 x 100 cm
courtesy the artist

5
Poultry Shed, 2018

wood, color, cardboard
110 x 40 x 30 cm
courtesy the artist

6
Keep Going, 2018

stop frame animation
6:24 min.
courtesy the artist



Supporting Program Winter 2018/2019

An Art Day's Night

The series "An Art Day's Night" offers podium discussions, lectures, catalog presentations, performances, concerts, general debate on and about art and takes place usually every Thursday 6 p.m. at free admission.

08 12 2018 2 p.m.

Artist Talk

Stuart Middleton

The artist Stuart Middleton offers insights into the concept and background of the exhibition "Motivation and Personality" in conversation with junior curator Jana Franze.

13 12 2018 6 p.m.

Curator's Tour

Sandro Droschl

Curator Sandro Droschl gives a tour through the current exhibition of British artist Stuart Middleton and offers a glimpse behind the scenes of the Künstlerhaus.

20 12 2018 6 p.m.

Dialog Tour

Salon Steiermark

In dialog with junior curator Jana Franze, the exhibited artists of "Salon Steiermark" will guide through the exhibition.

10 01 2019 6 p.m.

Lecture

Dr. Judith Benz-Schwarzburg Utilizing Animals – an Ethical Journey from the Farm to the Exhibition Space

Dr. Judith Benz-Schwarzburg (University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna) offers insights into the way the human-animal-relationship is organized in our time, how animals are utilized and to what extent reflections informed by cognitive science and ethics set limits to this utilization.

16 01 2019 6 p.m.

Lecture

Prof. Dr. Anja Ischebeck Homo Ludens – Learning through Play?

In reference to Stuart Middleton's artistic practice, Prof. Dr. Anja Ischebeck (Institute of Psychology, University of Graz) will give a lecture from the psychological perspective on the role of play in the learning process.

17 01 2019 6 p.m.

Closing Event

& Audience Award

Salon Steiermark

At the closing event, the audience award of "Salon Steiermark" will be presented. Afterwards, there will be a talk with the award recipients of the main-, advancement-, and audience award with junior curator Jana Franze.

every Saturday 2 p.m.

Guided tour

of the exhibitions

Art Education

Art Education at Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien offers a diverse program from art talks to art workshops, which enables a practical as well as thematic examination of the exhibitions shown.

12 01 2019 3 p.m.

Workshop Textile Upcycling with Stoffwerkstatt

Arts and crafts is old news – now it's time for upcycling! In this workshop, we will give your old clothes a new lease of life in the context of Stuart Middleton's exhibition "Motivation and Personality".

19 01 2019 3 p.m.

Workshop

Play Art

with Ludovico

Stuart Middleton explores in his art the influence of social environments on personality and how humans learn through games. In the frame of "Play Art", everyone is welcome to try different games together.

Duration 120 min.

Admission 2€

Registration via vb@km-k.at

Info www.km-k.at