

CORNELIA KONRADS
ENDANGERED SPECIES

Exhibition: September 11 – November 14, 2020

Opening: September 10 from 5pm to 8pm in presence of the artist



Cornelia Konrads, *Airarium*, 2020 (detail)
Glass, wood, metal, artificial stone, needles, nylon thread and insect wings
70 x 29.5 x 25 cm

We know her installations in parks and public spaces, where her poetic constructions seem to merge with their environment. Before creating her pieces, Cornelia Konrads explores at length the sites that are meant to welcome them. She immerses herself, feeling the atmosphere, memorizing sounds and scents, forms and lights, until she finds the exact spot where all her experiences can "converge" into a unique image. But if the artist enjoys working in the open and travelling from Europe to Japan and America, she equally enjoys working in her studio in the small town of Barsinghausen near Hanover, where she switches to a smaller scale and creates enigmatic sculptures. Through her first personal exhibition, the Virginie Louvet gallery chose to reveal this intimate side of her work.

Entitled "Endangered Species", the exhibition brings together recent pieces, or artworks made specifically for the occasion, all designed from objects and materials Cornelia Konrads found during her walks and travels and then assembled. "I keep loads of weird stuff, she says playfully. Unlike her installations which are directly connected to their context, these sculptures boast a life of their own, as "games on free form" and "blends of souvenirs lost and found". Where does inspiration come from? The artist does not know. Because it can arise at any moment and under any circumstance, from "things I catch out of the corner of my eye, that were left on the side of road, in moments of leisure, when I take a walk, when I drive or I take a bath". And sometimes at night. The materials themselves enable her to materialize the ideas in her mind.

Thus, the displayed creatures were born. In the words of Cornelia Konrads, they "inhabit an intermediate world which is slowly disappearing, each one representing a strange character, probably the last of its kind". Like her installations, these pieces are ambivalent, mixing humor with a sense of underlying urgency. "As always, I hope to bring simultaneously frustration, surprise, and a smile", says the artist. Here, a ceramic figurine with a diving helmet reveals through the glass a burnt candle wick, as if the figure had taken its last breath. There, two gloved hands try to make their indexes meet, but in vain, as each one is covered with a thimble. The exhibition also features an open book set on a stand, with needles and twigs sticking out in lieu of words. A memory of Cornelia Konrads's past life. Before following her path as an artist, she studied philosophy. A discipline that raises questions, like a true art form.

Annick Colonna-Césari

Born in 1957 In Wuppertal (Germany), Cornelia Konrads lives and works in Barsinghausen near Hanover in Germany.