

## Exhibition brings together sculptural works by ten artists spanning the constructivist era



Karsten Fodinger, *Void*, 2012. Sculpture in reinforcement steel and concrete boards, 410 x 610 x 410 cm. Courtesy Karsten Fodinger and RaebervonStenglin, Zurich.

**BRUSSELS.-** Fondation CAB is presenting *The Brutal Play*, a group exhibition curated by Matthieu Poirier which brings together sculptural works by ten artists spanning the constructivist era, 1960s minimalism and the present day. Working in the field of sculpture, these three generations of artists have prefigured or revisited a number of visual, spatial and technical qualities found in brutalist architecture, distinct in its intensive use of raw concrete, modular systems and simple geometry.

Constructivist sculptors such as Alexander Rodchenko favoured the exclusive use of materials taken directly from industrial production processes, as opposed to marble or bronze. In doing so the artist questioned the intrinsic value of artworks that are often associated with the cost, preciousness or rarity of their material components. *The Brutal Play* features some rarely seen small-scale wooden Spatial Construction sculptures by Rodchenko created in the 1920s which offer a visual definition of 'constructivism' with their geometric logic.

*Column* by Robert Morris, a pioneer of minimalist sculpture and process art, draws attention to the integral importance of the space around a sculpture as well as the viewer's perception of the object itself. Constructed originally as a stage device for a performance in New York in 1961, Morris would stand inside the column operating a rope device to make the sculpture's walls appear to fall outwards in a seemingly invisible action.

A selection of works from Charlotte Posenenske's iconic *Square Tubes* series are presented within the deconstructed 'demountable house' by Jean Prouvé (1944) that is now staged permanently at Fondation CAB. *Square Tubes* are made from galvanised sheet steel resembling the material used to create ventilation pipes and its basic components can be combined to create any number of configurations. As such the concept allows a curator to modify the installation according to his or her own criteria, relinquishing some of the artist's creative autonomy to others.

Valentin Carron presents a large-scale geometric wall relief made from raw aluminium that immediately provokes the question of where the boundaries between architecture and an artwork begin and end. Émilie Ding's large thick felt wall-based works are simple yet powerful using a partially burnt surface to create shape and minimal geometric patterns.

The Brutal Play reflects Fondation CAB's ongoing mission to facilitate the production of art by inviting several artists to create work in situ in response to the space's unique 1930's Art Deco architecture. Kilian Rüthemann will recreate a minimal sculpture work made in colourful foam which he will carve into a sarcophagus shape and leave outside to weather and deteriorate before carving into it. Karsten Födinger's invasive concrete intervention offers a spare but striking geometry and creates a notable tension between the architecture of Fondation CAB's space and its own seemingly unfinished state. A concrete sculpture by Ramon Feller exhibited in Fondation CAB's garden will slowly self-destruct over the course of the exhibition due to an integrated set of cables pulling at the object's surface.

"The Brutal Play reminds the viewer of the incredible power of materiality and the contradictory sense of instability that materials can have on the viewer's own perception of space and time. The artists taking part in the exhibition apply the same rejection of ornament and the aesthetics of place. In the digital age - the age of dematerialization - this exhibition takes the opposite approach of presenting contemporary sculpture as something physically embodied that speaks to the living body of the viewer, momentarily liberated from its cerebral dependence on the image, on digital screens and on illusion". – Matthieu Poirier

Curator Matthieu Poirier holds a PhD in art history from Paris-Sorbonne University and Institut national d'histoire de l'art, where he taught. He has also lectured at the École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs (Paris), at The School of Fine Arts (Rouen and Angoulême) and was Research Fellow at the German Center for Art History. He has recently curated Hans Hartung. A Constant Storm (Perrotin, New York), Artur Lescher. Porticus (Palais d'Iéna, Paris), Cruz-Diez. A Floating Being (Palais d'Iéna, Paris), DYNAMO. A Century of Light and Movement in Art (Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris), Mack. Spectrum (Perrotin, Paris), Soto. A Retrospective (Musée Soulages, Rodez), Kazuko Miyamoto (Circuit Centre d'Art, Lausanne), Post-Op and Soto. Chronochrome (Perrotin, Paris and New York) and Spectres (Roesler Hotel, Sao Paulo). He was the Scientific advisor for Julio Le Parc (Palais de Tokyo, Paris), Eye Attack (Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk) and Lumière et Mouvement (Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris). He is a member of IAAC and IKT.