

Nicolas Pelzer

Exhibition title: Nervous Pickers

Venue: ≈ 5, Cologne

Date: 2021 February 13 – April 11

Photography: Hermes Villena

<http://ung-5.com>

In front of us two giant tooth picks, abstracted through size, revealing their surface structure. Nicolas Pelzer's technique here is connecting to an earlier piece in which he scaled a set of clipped fingernails and as such emphasizes and exposes more of what they are. This time, the size of the scaled object which Pelzer calls magnification abstraction possesses the size of a human. Traces of a human in this ob- or abject are also visible in almost an intrusive manner through the surface structure of the original chewed tooth picks. This might translate the users' original sentiment into an object-performance: a nervous chew. The shape seems passively stamped into but is actually actively 3D-printed throughout the tooth pick. A medical 3D-scanner has precisely picked up the microscopic objects' peculiarities: An involved process of a thing being chewed-touched-used, touched-seen-produced and articulated carefully by a machine. Finally in solid form, the objects do not suggest developing their own life. Rather being tied to the wall, brutally exhausting the space inside the U-Bahn-station's window, the shiny white surface standing out from the monochromatic red holders and background.

Walter Benjamin offers a surprising reading of the early version of Mickey Mouse. While in daytime, we are bored and exhausted with and by industrial society, in our dreams, we are able to see technology performing as something spontaneous, even ironic. Mickey mouse is such dream material, in which nature and culture become one in an array of unforeseen events in which lifeless and living things interplay within mickey's own body. Mickey Mouse for Benjamin is an example of what humans would resemble as soon as they would have merged with technology. As such they would be the next version of the relation of technology and the human, which he understands as deeply social and a potential field for experimentation. Technology's current form might make us sleep through the day, but in our dreams, another technology-relation is already articulating: objects possess their own kind of agency and humans interact with objects in an erratic way that reaches beyond utilitarian thinking.

Pelzer's amplification of a minor but acute remnant of a movement could easily be an object in a dream, but its' as solid as it could be. While the process of producing might remind the viewer of what Benjamin said about mickey mouse, nervous pickers points to an almost intimidating robustness and helpless fragility at the same time. A little bit like the hidden nervousness of a cowboys' chewing of a tooth pick in his way of suggesting: I'm unconcerned.

Leonie Döpfer