

A piano key with Brancusi-esque sawtooth

It may at first seem odd to have invited Nadia Naveau to participate in an exhibition on G58, since her thinking derives chiefly from the figure, or even, I might venture to say, from the figure's joints. Her modelling technique and ability to give plastic expression to figures are unsurpassed. Nevertheless, she almost always takes an eclectic approach to the composition of her sculptures: sometimes by setting up encounters between figures and forms from different worlds (Bernini meets The Simpsons), but mostly by adding heterogeneous elements or – as in her early years – materials. Even then her figures were cut short, blocked, stunted, painted, staged. The addition of these heterogeneous elements later became a part of the modelled forms, meaning that they were not added, but modelled as part of the whole.

In one recent composite sculpture (*Be Prepared, Bunnykins!*) for example, we recognise the figure of an English 'scout rabbit' which, in its recumbent position, becomes unrecognisable and could just as easily be a decorative element or a form that is needed for compositional purposes. Sometimes it involves pedestals or tree trunks, sometimes geometric forms such as cylinders or circular holes.

Gradually, Naveau's work has evolved in such a way that the abstract elements have gained equal status and sometimes even appear to round off the sculptures, like a piano key with Brancusi-esque sawtooth, you might say, or as a fragment from an early Mexican, Etruscan or African sculpture. The forms of G58 (the things that move in unusual ways, the nails, pins and wires, the geometric forms, the collage structure, the invisible things) all appear over again in Naveau's sculptures.

In the three-dimensional collage *A Random Sample*, which Naveau did for the M HKA, we recognise her composite, eclectic and multiform method, which does not disappear as a result of being transformed into clay and cast in a single material. The work as a whole is made up of boxes, baking trays, a slab of expanded polystyrene, sculptures in clay, Plastiline, epoxy, terracotta and ceramics, colour and glaze tests, perforated planks, English sweets (Liquorice Allsorts), framed collages with sandpaper, and numerous other things left over from Naveau's sculptural activities, pushed aside, rejected for the time being, waiting in purgatory for approval to exist officially. Here and there we see the birth of a figure, lost in the ruins of the Hessenhuis, such as Yves Klein's imprints of women or Hugo Heyrmans and Panamarenko's *Feltra*, which came into being eight years after 1958. It's odd how fashions change, how some approaches can fall out of grace and then come back into acceptance again. History is an inextricable tangle of forms and ideas, in which our experiences with the works form the only reality.

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