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Diego Perrone

Self Portraits

January 12 – February 18

Opening Thursday, January 12, 2017

Casey Kaplan and Massimo De Carlo are pleased to present *Self Portraits* and *Herbivorous Carnivorous*, two concurrent exhibitions by Italian artist Diego Perrone (b. 1970, Asti). Debuting in New York and Milan, Perrone presents new glass sculptures accompanied by Biro on paper drawings.

Diego Perrone approaches his practice with aesthetic inventiveness by reimagining stylistic and classically technical processes. He accesses a transitory space that merges representation with the indescribable. At the center of this exhibition, a bridge between convention and innovation is built through Perrone's exploration of a time-honored technique of casting glass. As molten glass solidifies within its plaster mold, individual fragments are heated and fused together to produce distinct yet amorphous shapes and imagery. Pigment-infused minerals and oxides form gradations and clouds of color that filter through the translucent glass, each layer caught between crystal and soil.

Perrone's usage of cast glass originated from his previous series of fiberglass sculptures, entitled "La fusione della campana (The casting of the bell)" (2005-2008). Conceived from traditional metal and bronze casting techniques, Perrone merged the three stages of bell casting into objects that were not bells, but bizarrely abstracted tubular and natural forms attached to bell shells. Tradition, time, and space were compressed into liquefied structures resembling excavated landscapes.

In a 2013 presentation at Museion Bolzano, Italy, Perrone applied this process using glass, presenting a series of sculptures in which representations of an ear and its spiral innards emerged. The repetition of the ear canal throughout the artist's practice, initially appearing in Biro on paper drawings in 1995, connects an anatomical anomaly to organic forms within nature. To Perrone, a material's capacity to simultaneously cloak the passing of time through a physical object merges notions of permanence with the elusiveness of elements forever in motion. Curing for months on end, immiscible liquids are paused in a forced interaction within each glass sculpture. This tumultuous phase, resulting in the irregular contouring of diverging planes, is captured in a single object nebulously shaped as the artist in profile.

The spherical glass heads contain recurring motifs within Perrone's practice. Imagery of koi fish and tractors circle the space of the artist's psyche. The repetition of symbols rooted in the artist's rural upbringing alludes to living landscapes, by land or by sea (or in this case, pond), as they persist within the artist's consciousness. In a surreal daze the tractor plows through from the corporeal to the cerebral. Perrone's works on paper embody similar perspectives of the artist in profile. Viewed from peculiar downward angles, the agitated red Biro drawings are guided by striations of color and line, converging into forms that seem to shift and vibrate.

Translated by the physical and mental consumption of his surroundings, natural shapes and landscapes dwell within the artist's mind. Each artwork in *Self Portraits* and *Herbivorous Carnivorous* addresses and challenges an overwhelming yet calming feeling of emptiness, where even the most fleshly actions are coated by a tangible mist.

Self Portraits marks Diego Perrone's fourth exhibition with Casey Kaplan in New York. Perrone has participated in exhibitions at venues and institutions internationally, such as Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino (2016); Triennale di Milano, curated by Vincenzo de Bellis (2015); Museo Ettore Fico, Torino (2015); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2014); 55th International Exhibition of Art, Venice Biennale (2013); Museion, Project Room, Bolzano (2013) (solo); Museo Marino Marini, Florence (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia (2012); National Center for Contemporary Art, Grenoble (2010); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL (2010); Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MI (2008) (solo); Malmo Art Museum, Sweden (2008); and Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux (2008) (solo), among others. Perrone's work is held in the permanent collections of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Castello di Rivoli, Torino. The artist lives and works in Asti and Milan.