

## Return of the object

Marisa Olson

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## The Disorder of things

Exhibited artists: Annabelle Arlie, Iain Ball, DeLong, Constant Dullaart, Tereza Fišerová - Evžen Šimera, Martin Kohout, Martin Kolarov - Filip Dvořák, Kristýna Lutzová, Štěpán Marko, Richard Nikl - Jan Brož, Nik Timková - Jakub Hošek, Magdaléna Vojteková, Ted Whitaker

Curator: Václav Janoščík

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*"Sometimes you get fascinated by the object which [that object] represents" Martin Kohout<sup>1</sup>*

The history of art (in 20th century) has often been retold in terms of dematerialization, deskilling, de-aesthetization or loosening its medium specificity. Most recent and radiant outburst in such conceptualization seems to be the advent of the Internet. Both artistic generations dealing with the Internet, netartist and postinternet art, tend to be addressed in terms of virtual environment and its specific presence. On the other hand, the Internet and its modes of interaction brought a renewed interest in the object.

There might be diverse reasons for such a course of practice from the very transgression between the online and gallery environment, as exemplified by Artie Vierkant's well known Image Object,<sup>2</sup> to reflecting the commodification of the object in culture at large, as theorized in accelerationism<sup>3</sup> or "visualized" by the DIS images.<sup>4</sup> We may see this tendency even in the dynamic of the virtual environment itself; consider the notion of the Internet of things as an instance.<sup>5</sup>

In such a tense and dynamic situation condensed by the immense pressure of expectations, the level of theory and practice may be easily and indeed hastily interrelated. We may be tempted to associate speculative realism and object-oriented philosophy with some of the outbursts of contemporary art.

From the view of a speculative realist, our philosophy has been for almost two centuries kept in the post-Kantian boundaries of the subject-object structure. The subject, even in the position of a philosopher or an artist, was reflecting the object, and their being was bound to this reflection. Both philosophers and artist have recently shifted their focus to the "inhuman",<sup>6</sup> assuming the position without the subject.

We want to avoid any short-circuits arising from routine philosophical contextualization and usage of gleaming notions, rather we aim at opening the space for discussing further the gravity of such concepts and theories. Nonetheless the exhibition itself intends to elevate the relevance that the object as an object has in contemporary art that is reflective of current modes of cultural redistribution.

Thus reframing the object is neither accidental to exhibited works nor the basis to which they can be reduced. We want to focus on the moment from which the very objecthood unfolds. It may be the experience of touching, desiring and adhering to it that may even result in what Timothy Morton calls the "tuning to the object".<sup>7</sup> Or it may revolve around the very border of objects and our conception of it.

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Nonetheless, this moment of a human (subject) confronting himself with the object is outplayed, expanded and appropriated by the artworks themselves. Their objecthood unfolds with distinctive and autonomous, aesthetic or conceptual outcomes. The object breaks its physical limits by means of its viscosity, being molten or inter-objective. The turn to the object indeed becomes the tune to the object. It is not the viewer or human being turning somehow backwards to the passive objects. It is the object that turns and looks.

The exhibition does not aim by any means at a representative overview. That would be both futile and contrasting the subject matter. Rather we want to outplay a diverse and distinctive way in which the authors elevate the being of an object. Our ambition then is to expand the field of possible understanding concerning the status of an object or its objecthood in contemporary culture that may resonate within the context of speculative realism, object-oriented ontology, Post-Internet, or accelerationism.

This whole project arises from a vivid, maybe even naive belief that this dialogue between art and philosophy is precisely what we need in our present condition.

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1 <http://www.aqnb.com/2015/05/26/martin-kohout-figures-p/>

2 <http://artievierkant.com/imageobjects.php>

3 [http://www.urbanomic.com/pub\\_accelerate.php](http://www.urbanomic.com/pub_accelerate.php)

4 <http://disimages.com>

5 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_of\\_Things](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_of_Things)

6 Take Inhuman exhibition taking place in Fridericianum and Alien phenomenology coined by Ian Bogost as recent instances of such interest.

<http://www.fridericianum.org/exhibitions/inhuman>

Bogost, Ian (2012). Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing. University of Minnesota Press.

7 Morton Timothy (2013), Hyperobjects, Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World, University of Minnesota Press, p. 174.

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