

JUDITH HOPF

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Sabeth Buchmann—Bricklike hands waving at them, sculptures standing like skeletal bodies in the room. Your recent works continue the mixture of alternating geometric abstraction and figuration, object and subject, that is familiar from the genre of comics, and which I also recognize in your *Wartende Laptops* (Waiting Laptops) and *Erschöpfte Vasen* (Exhausted Vases): apparatuses and objects with psychological quirks that remind us of ourselves and hence of the question of why we see and feel that which we see and feel, and *how* we see and feel it. Always a trace too unstable to pass as entirely self-confident “works,” they could be regarded as replacements or placeholders for ourselves: They seem to ask *how* art could be created beyond the continual reproduction of the forms intended for it in order to touch on the often unclarified relationship we have to it.

Judith Hopf—The hands and the other sculptures are made of fired bricks. First the bricks were formed into various cuboids, and then their forms were hewn out and separated. The bricks used were all originally made of clay, of course, but they were industrially produced and hence are a standardized size. Any attempt to make a perfect, geometric form, such as a cuboid, from clay by hand will probably fail. By contrast, the effort to make regular bricks of clay and to make or fire them using technology has been a cultural challenge since time immemorial. It seems we have solved that, at least, today: bricks are technically perfect. They form a regular, repeating pattern when they are laid, and, in the service of architectural requirements (if one has learned the skilled craft of masonry) they form perfect lines and flat surfaces. From an artistic perspective, these contemporary bricks, with their rigid appearance, also have an inherent Donald Judd-like quality. As so often, my sculptures struggle through my fascination for modernity, through the gullies of minimalist art and systems of reference in order to pin their aesthetic experiments with “emptying” to something new or different: for example, the nonfunctioning wheels and parts of a trolley that are produced by pressing clay together. For me, the comic-like quality you mention has less to do with the form of the objects and sculptures than with the narrative level that seems to sneak into all my objects.

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