

Crypto Codes made of archaic wood

Mathias Hornung uses old oak wood to create a futuristic clou. On view at Regensburg's Galerie Lesmeister.

By Gabriele Mayer.

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Mathias Hornung is showing current works at Galerie Isabelle Lesmeister on Obermünsterstraße. Photo: altrofoto.de

REGENSBURG. Mathias Hornung, born 1965, used to be a machine technician and later on studied stage and costume design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart. He's been living in Berlin since 1992, but his work has led him across half the world.

His preferred artistic field is sculptures, his most frequently used material is robust oak wood, which he treats with an angle grinder and different kinds of saws. Large, rectangular, but only a few centimeters thick wall objects and smaller, more compact modular objects, oftentimes fringed on the corners and the sides of the pieces are now on view at Galerie Lesmeister.

Archaic Material

All of the works are quite heavy, made of plain wood, with partially darker stained spots, originated from climatic conditions. The thick pieces of wood are scored with extremely fine lines, orthogonal, consisting of horizontal and vertical lines, crossing right through the wood and narrowly placed cuts give an illusion of fine grit works. From another angle, the works can be understood as topographical models, views from the top, looking upon a big city from a bird's perspective.

Every step is handmade, which means, there can be tears where the wood has spread or other uneven and irregular occurrences – like a metaphor for life's true zig zag structures or interwoven street grits. Or one tries to see objects – “Crypto Codes”, the exhibition title implies it – patterns as imitations of modern structures, like the processors on the inside of computers. In this case, the works would seem as a double for heavy machines. In any case, this is a kind of art that one doesn't come across on a daily basis. It lives off of linear concepts and orders, that continue to be destroyed within the process after all – partially through offset colors being printed onto parts of the wood. Is something broken, peeled off or is there a hidden function the naïve beholder can't grasp? The material gives us an impression of fairly aged works – which lies in contrast to the grandeur heading towards electronic technologies.

The exhibition is on view until November 9th

The tension of the works is created through the strength and heaviness and the subtlety and abundance of the structures. And the irritating deviations from order, deriving from the randomness of the natural material and the way it was treated, can also guide our thoughts towards a fictive, yet daring unknown system of symbols, hovering over all that is.