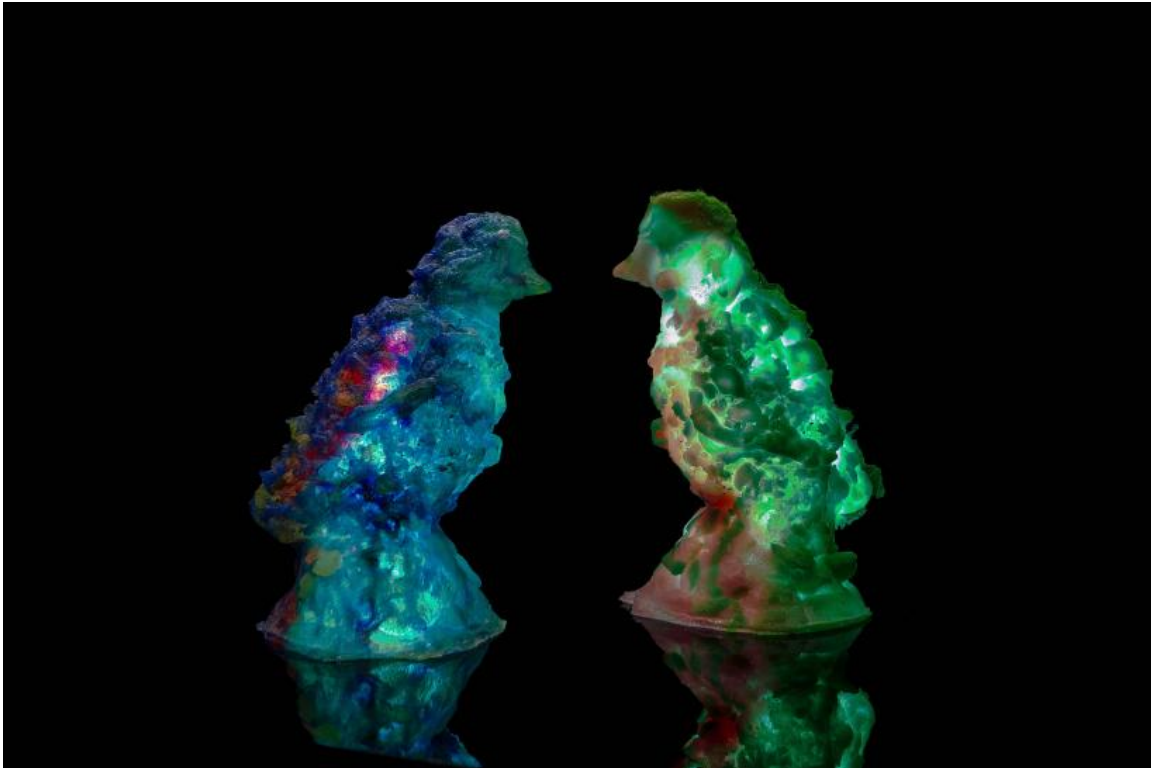


this is art

Contemporary Art Magazine

Marco Giordano: To Disturb Somnolent Birds



Artist : Marco Giordano

Title : Dopey Birds

Date(s) : 2020

Medium : Sculpture: 17 x 12 x 9 cm, 6 3/4 x 4 3/4 x 3 1/2 in each Plinth: 30 x 30 x 30 cm, 11 4/5 x 11 4/5 x 11 4/5 in

Material : Resin, pigment, LED, perspex

Website : <https://www.themoderninstitute.com/exhibitions/to-disturb-somnolent-birds-2020-02-01/6977/>
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Credit : Photo: Patrick Jameson

Review by Elaine Y.J Zheng

At the threshold of consciousness and sleep, nineteen resin sculptures lit by LED rest on a wooden bench, marking the entry into Marco Giordano's reverie. Eerie whispers fill the gallery, transporting visitors to continents far away, into a dream-like state. Time is suspended by an ethereal soundtrack; a lullaby calling to "sing or sink" reverberates across the gallery space.

The site of lucid dreams is also a place of release, where unconscious desire meets awareness meets action. By casting phallic resembling objects in this space of integration, Giordano hints at the celebration of crude sensation, as the dreamer becomes free to follow his intuition.

In this half-conscious state, at the threshold of agency, we find Giordano's sculptures. From afar, they resemble artefacts salvaged from distant caverns, only brighter, stranger, crystallised by the hands of the artist.

In the dark, they illuminate and fade, inviting the viewer to enter a fluorescent space of purple, yellow, and pink. Up close, the outlines of each figure become clear - the crests and beaks of nineteen birds are frozen in space, caught in a singular moment.

The figures are small, but their brilliant pigments and dead-pan gaze fill the room with presence. Amidst stillness, flickering lights alone present a hint of movement - a motion that does not reach outwards, but within each of the resin constructions.

Though Giordano's approach feels contemporary, it draws upon traditional practices and spiritual connotations. Colour is used to mark an ephemeral passage, a transitory state, the glimpse of a conversation intercepted. Giordano's colours fade and change, negating their importance as symbols and instead focusing the gaze upon the subjects of the sculptures.

The works have names such as 'Pensive Sibling' or 'Hypotonic Twins', which echo the theme of contemplation and sleep, while potent titles like 'drowsy' or 'swollen' suggest movement or transformation that overrides the meditation and momentarily breaches the illusion.

Language does not serve the sculptures but interrupts otherwise strong stand-alone pieces. While bold titles inform our understanding of individual works, within the context of the installation, they cannot help but feel redundant, if not antithetical, to the unspoken understanding that seeks to be communicated through the senses.

Accompanying the installation is a curious essay by Ari Nielson, highly evocative of the press release with the rigour of an academic. Here, Nielson alludes to the lullaby as an extension of the oral tradition, which grants access to the threshold of consciousness as an in-between space, one that offers alternate suggestions and establishes new understandings of existing structures (notably the political).

Though it remains uncertain whether Giordano's work aspires to any politics of resistance, they remain a welcome interruption from everyday life. At once objects of beauty and intrigue, they speak to our common desire to be roused from the incessant slumber of the mundane.

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