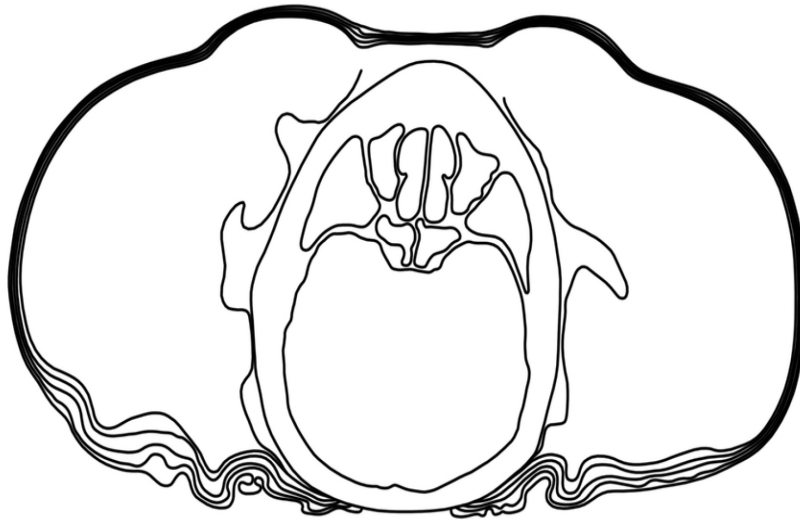


ARTFORUM

INTERVIEWS

OLIVER LARIC

February 26, 2018 • As told to Kristian Vistrup Madsen



Oliver Laric, *untitled*, 2018, 4K video, color, sound, 4 minutes 50 seconds.

Oliver Laric is an Austrian artist based in Berlin. Questioning notions of ownership and originality, he uses 3-D scanning technologies to make historical artworks and other objects available to be copied on his website, threedscans.com. Laric's own ghostly versions of classical and neoclassical statues were exhibited most recently at the Schinkel Pavilion in Berlin. From March 3 to April 14, 2018, he will show new works in the exhibition "Year of the Dog" at [Metro Pictures](#) in New York.

I AM INTERESTED in moving towards uncertainty. My work offers attempts to reinscribe or open up the material I'm looking at and make it less categorical. I feel more comfortable with the idea of objectivity—or even authenticity—when it's not bound to a single reality or single narrative. For instance, at one point in history, the objective depiction of a flower was considered to be made by drawing *one* flower that you found, with all its idiosyncrasies and

flaws, and at another, by drawing the average of one hundred flowers, or by depicting ten different flowers. And so objectivity, too, is a very unstable concept.

The as-of-now untitled video I'm showing at Metro Pictures is the continuation of one that I was working on in 2014 and 2015, for which I went through extensive parts of the history of animation and looked for scenes in which people, objects, and animals transform. With this new work, I am not focusing just on metamorphosis, but also on the moments in between moments. As such, the aspect of time is more present here; every scene is presented slowed down, and there is never an idea of closure, or resolve. I've become very aware of this in terms of editing: You get to a position where something is final, but that's just a tiny moment, and then it moves on. You never spend time in position A or position B—you just cut between transitions.

Along with the video, I am showing three resin sculptures cast from the same mold of a half-human, half-dog animal holding another smaller dog. The three are like distant cousins, both similar and different, and, in a way, I'm uncovering the process of how that difference is made. To me, the sentiment of the video and the sculptures is quite alike. I wanted to have a sculpture in two layers, where you can't see one without the other. They are hollow on the inside and never completely opaque, so you can always glimpse this inner world.

Usually, I make sculptures completely based on other people's works. The precursor that led to this one is Jean Carriès's *Frog-Man* from 1891, which is at the Musée d'Orsay. A few years ago, maybe I would have made a scan and used it, but now I'm excited about having a slightly different working method where I don't rely so much on an existing form. I chose the dog because I wanted to work with an animal that is closely entangled with humans or, put differently, is a minority in the wild and a majority in captivity. The show is called "Year of the Dog" because it happens to be the year of the dog according to the Chinese Zodiac. But, like in the video, I'm not referring to a specific, charismatic animal. It's not Laika, or Lassie, or Hachiko, or any dog that you would know, but rather the idea of a dog—a generic, basic dog.

What draws me to the generic form is that it is interpreted for different purposes. From early on, that's what fascinated me about neoclassical sculptures, too. They were already the second birth of a type of form and, in that sense, not really final. The cartoons I utilize in the video are also not quite generic, but at the same time they couldn't be assigned to a specific author. They are general depictions of humans or animals—archetypes or allegorical figures—that could be adapted to whatever circumstance. I like when there's an openness or a generosity to a form that can just become and continue to become, and is never fixed as an entity.

— As told to Kristian Vistrup Madsen