

## Lo spazio di Mateusz Choróbski

Mateusz Choróbski (Radomsko, 1987) observes the surrounding reality and translates each of its aspects into works that are expressed through an articulated variety of linguistic systems: sculptural, video, performative, installations. Drawing from a varied iconographic and iconological repertoire, often inspired to everyday life and to subjects that mark the dilution over time (ordinary objects, poor materials, natural organisms), these works are able to touch every aspect of the perceptive system, soliciting the spectator under the visual, intellectual and emotional profiles, turning the viewer into an active participant, almost complicit of the creation process; such is the triggered mechanism. This approach is emphasized further both by the humbleness of the materials used, almost as a warning of the temporary nature of existence and of its destiny to transform, as well as the essentiality of the subjects involved, close to the collective imaginary and, therefore, easily identifiable. Among the latter there is undoubtedly space, which has always occupied a central role in Choróbski's research.

And space will be, in fact, the protagonist of the exhibit in Florence, where, by inverting the ordinary, the main rooms of the gallery will act as a prelude to the *project room*; the pulsing heart of the entire project. Leading to this room is a sequence of works exemplifying Choróbski's research, where the observation of physical and chemical phenomena present in nature combines with the analysis of *objets trouvés* which – just as mineral and botanical elements – he dissects and rebuilds into plastic agglomerates whose presence sensibly changes the perception of the space that homes them, both on a visual and a physical level. Even the genetic and structural alterations of the materials adopted contribute to this goal, and occur according to logics of self-determination comparable to those of *process art*. Once the intervention is complete (disassembly and reassembly of an object, dissection and rebuilding of the substance it consists of), the artist observes the process and leaves time and matter to run their course, thus amplifying the effects of what he has already elaborated. Hence the shift is quick from the narrative (the artist's intervention) to the fantasy (the action carried out by the laws of physics and chemistry that complete the previous process).

The sequence opens with *Cream* (2018), an acronym for *Cash Rules Everything Around Me*, a song by the hip-hop group from New York, Wu-Tang Clan. The sculpture consists of molten, grosz coins. The market value of the metallic mold is greater than the nominal one of the coins involved, and equal to the sum of the debts accumulated by the artist in the moment of its creation. The material obtained presents itself in its original guise: irregular, soft as a *creamy* mixture, in line with the personal reinterpretation of the procedural poetics by Choróbski. The result is a proteiform outline that the artist divides into two parts, revealing the graphite interior and setting it into dialogue with the surrounding space that, virtually, integrates it in constantly different forms, based on the varying of environmental conditions. The dialogue with space is renewed in *144150\_1:6* (2019), a steel and brass sculpture whose title is inspired first by the number of coins used to create it (144150), and then by the ratio established with the location for which it was originally conceived, of which it is six times smaller. Just as a box being constructed, the elements that compose the metallic volume are presented individually, released along the exhibition itinerary almost to shed light on its expressive capacity, regardless of their final destination. The sculptural compositions *High Windows (radiator, thermos filler glass)* (2019) in steel, glass and light, and *After the thought of high windows (thermos filler glass, radiator)* (2019), in the same materials, faintly brighten the space,

gently shaping its visual contours and ideally complementing the itinerary that leads to the project room.

A wooden structure (*A Step Away – wood*, 2020) sets the walking plane of this last area at the height of the room that precedes it, which, instead, is lower (as demonstrated by the existence of a staircase, hidden for the occasion), slightly altering the perception. A feeling, the latter, that is emphasized further by the *work in progress* atmosphere that dominates it, mainly caused by the wooden floor that, left in a raw state as that of a construction site, sets doubts on whether it is yet to be completed, or is near demolition. Moreover, if we think of the proportions of the accessible surface, rather limited compared to those of the precedent room, and to their true nature, lowered as that of a basement, the sense of unease increases, leaving the spectator in a dimension of a suspended ambiguity. From the penumbra rise a few works. The vast environment that precedes and blends with the *project room* hosts *997,10/2* (2020) an installation whose title derives from the sum of the money – the Polish grosz – molded together to create the metallic columns connecting the room's floor to the ceiling, thus defining its volumes. The value of the coins corresponds to what the National Statistics Office in Poland defines as a state of poverty for two people who live together; in other words, the monthly cost for food, housing, clothes, medicines, and hygiene. The poverty threshold is the lowest and most alarming level to satisfy daily needs, under which human life is at risk, and the brass columns represent an ideal yet dramatic representation of this. In the same room, between the window and the metallic grid that protects it from the outside, is *A Step Away (thermos, glass, light)* (2020), an ensemble of sculptures realized using thermoses, or generic objects serving a function that traces back to the idea of warmth and comfort reiterated even by their same conformation; taken apart and cut, the thermoses are put back together to generate outlines similar to those of bullet casings. Their position sets in dialogue the natural light that enters from the window with the artificial one given off by the works themselves, further elevating the degree of stunning precariousness that has already been abundantly widespread. The exhibit culminates in the smallest open nook, which hosts *A Step Away (glass, light)* (2020), an anti-decubitus, glass mattress, reinforced by a metallic grill. Below it is a lamp that emits a weak light, barely

sufficient to distinguish the bottom of the work from the plane on which it stands, making it one with the latter and entirely integrating it to the space hosting it. As bleak is the light that comes from *After the thought of high windows (radiator, thermos, filler glass)* (2019), which warms up the atmosphere with a golden aura that, virtually, contributes to sculpt the narrow space. Beyond this, there is nothing else, if not the chance to start the journey again, in the opposite direction. In a circular, seamless motion, underlining even more the centrality of space for the artists' project.