

DIENSTGEBÄUDE Art Space Zürich
November 26, 2016 – February 4, 2017
Opening: Saturday, November 26, 7 pm

PS3

Nicolas Raufaste

After Tropical Race 4

Tropical race 4 (TR4) is the name of the spores of the mushroom *Fusarium oxysporum* f. Sp. *Cubense* (Foc), which caused the "Panama-disease" of the Cavendish banana. Since the 1950s, this variety has dominated the international banana trade and has shaped our concept of how a banana should look and taste like. Andy Warhol used it for the cover of the album *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, and thus turned the yellow berry into an icon of art. Originally from Asia, it was planted in the context of slave trade in South and Central America. Cavendish bananas were cultivated in large monocultures due to their resistance to Tropical Race 1. For Race 4, however, they are highly vulnerable. The epidemic is a direct result of globalized mass production. "Bananageddon" is on our doorsteps.

These interweavings of big and small stories, of the local and global fascinate Nicolas Raufaste. The research on the history and origin of consumer goods leads like a red thread through his artistic work. He works in a variety of media: sculpture, object, photography, performance, music, ready-made, installation. Raufaste also integrates the exhibition space into the presentation and creates narratives with the exhibited works. At DIENSTGEBÄUDE it is the yellow light, which turns the rather traditional form of presentation into a spatial installation.

His interest in market mechanisms and consumption patterns also has a biographical component. Growing up in the Swiss town of Orbe, the Biel-based artist witnessed how the local shop of his mother had been put under pressure by the wholesale trade. *Advertising* (2010 - 2016) shows the façade of a former banana storage hall in Art Deco style. Raufaste took the photograph six years ago in the French town of Niort. The size and the yellow lighting create an astonishingly plastic effect – as if the space would continue behind the entrance door. Recently, Raufaste discovered the APG poster board as an artistic medium.

In his solo exhibition at the EAC (les halles) in Porrentruy, he exhibited the blank background of those billboards, revealing their astonishingly beautiful surfaces, which are normally concealed by colourful and extrovert advertising messages. With such minimal means, Raufaste addresses the great questions of global politics and economy. By creating installations with recycled waste, he exercises critique of consumerism in a congenial and witty manner.

The empty banana peel appears in various states, forms and materials in his oeuvre. As an aluminium sculpture in *After Tropical Race 4 (relic # 1)* (2010 - 2016), it looks precious and receives an almost figurative character. If you have watched science-fiction films such as *War of the Worlds*, it is easy to imagine extraterrestrials, on three legs and eagerly leaning forward, on their way to explore new territory.

The Invader is the name of the "protagonist" (a banana peel cast in bronze), in the multi-manipulated photographs *After Tropical Race 4 (apparition # 1)* and *After Tropical Race 4 (apparition # 2)* (2010 - 2016). He is not a professional photographer, emphasizes Raufaste. Accordingly, he also uses cheap cameras rather than high-quality devices. In a multi-level procedure, he processes the images digitally and manually. In the end, they are rather multi-layered objects than photographs. Through the processing of the negative, the images appear ethereal or dreamlike, as if they would dissolve every moment. The yellow light in combination with the exhibition title enhances the surreal-postapocalyptic impression. At the end there remains a certain discomfort, because somehow one cannot get easily rid of the thought: The invader - that's me.