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Valentin Magaro

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- This first monograph on Valentin Magaro covers the work he has produced between 2005 and 2009. A special book on an extraordinary contemporary artist

The eruption of the absurd into normality: since he studied drawing, the easy option for Valentin Magaro would have been to represent people and objects naturalistically. However, he has chosen to go a different way in his drawings and paintings. Whereas he always depicts human beings schematically, for example in the form of lay figures, his grotesque architecture seems to have sprung from self-organizing growth. Born in Switzerland in 1972, Magaro seems unwilling to distinguish between inanimate matter and animate living beings in his work. Doll-like figures in his pictures are often placed in excruciating contexts. Nevertheless, Valentin Magaro is not concerned with creating gruesome effects. Far from it. He succeeds in engaging our empathy and stimulating our imagination through the very stringency of his draughtsmanship. What the viewer sees in his mind's eye are new, monstrous images of unpleasant hybrids created from neutral, precise forms. Reality is deconstructed, only to be recombined in nightmarish scenes. References to the surreal illustrations of a Max Ernst are linked in this pictorial cosmos with associations of M. C. Escher's impossible perspectives as well as narrative approaches borrowed from twentieth-century comics. And even though Valentin Magaro's pictorial inventions may seem at first sight both under control and calculated, closer scrutiny reveals the exact opposite: the images born of his feverish imagination tend to take matters into their own hands and their content goes out of control.

Text in English & German.

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