

MICHÈLE PAGEL

Rats Roaches Pigeons People

11.2.–25.3. 2023

Pagel: *"We already have enough dystopias behind us. Their hybrids determine our present. What has grown together, mutated, emerged has established itself as everyday figures. Executed in ceramic, steel and concrete, the sculptures contain allegories of what was washed up from the past onto the shore of the present."*

For Michèle Pagel, dystopia, as a draft of a pessimistic vision of the future of questionable social developments, and utopia, as the possibility of positive counter-drafts, seem to be discursively opposed to each other. However, many utopias and dystopias arise when they develop determinate ideas whose disadvantages they conceal. This is politically dangerous and aesthetically weak in an artistic sense and prevents any attempt at improvement right from the start.

The two-sided lever "Utopia-Dystopia" seems rather suspicious to Pagel, because it becomes dangerous to any speculative fantasy, whose challenge to mind, heart and soul consists precisely in inventing the appropriate and 'artful' way to expand the respective mental horizons. This sometimes has to be fought for when it becomes politically and socially necessary, but the joke her sculptures evoke is different.

Pagel flexibly locates her often two-part sculptures between Aristotelian poetics and Brechtian dialectics – that means on the one hand between the examination of means of expression, function and effect of sculpture and on the other hand the consideration of socio-political dimensions. It is obviously important to her that both the causal relationships and the ethical dimensions are explicitly understandable and that the arousal of emotions and a critical, rational attitude are not mutually exclusive.