

*Olga goes Cargo* – the title of the exhibition is at the same time also the title of one of Roland Reiter’s sculptural works from the group “Transformation”: Olga, the buffalo cow – or, more precisely, her bust, prepared in such a way that it is reminiscent of a trophy – faces us in a sadly melancholic state of mind, while her horns have turned into a bundle of long wooden slats the dimensions of which seem to make it impossible to close the mobile shipping crate in which Olga has been placed. Which suggests that the story alluded to in the title will end where it was actually expected to begin...

In his installations and sculptural and photographic works, Roland Reiter stages such contradictions or situations oscillating between absurdity and everyday reality, between psychodrama and humor, in terms of a “romantic theatricalization of a naturalism whose identity has been distorted through interference,” as the artist himself defines his approach. What might be considered “naturalistic” here are the individual elements or materials deriving directly from the stock of nature or everyday culture, such as the bust of the female buffalo in *Olga* or the human hair, stuffed birds, or automobile in other work groups. The artist combines such “natural produce” with specially crafted constructions – such as the wooden crate in the present case or the metal rods in his *Hair Identities* – or with silicone, a material that is translucent on the one hand and non-natural on the other. The latter lends itself to creating soft transitions between the individual elements of a work and is simultaneously used as a medium for blurring or defamiliarizing the reality of an artifact. The “interference” with the identity of natural objects is thus brought about in a twofold way: through the combination of unrelated elements, “images”, and materials, and through the alteration or camouflage of form. This results in our eye looking “behind” or “underneath” things instead of lingering on the surface of the manifestations it beholds, contrary to its habitual ambition to immediately identify and clarify what it sees. Conversely, one could also put it in the words of Andreas Müller and say that Roland Reiter endeavors “to dissolve the subject as a final consequence in order to make its nature visible and graspable for the viewer.”

(Lucas Gehrmann, curator, Kunsthalle Wien)