

YVES SCHERER
IN CONVERSATION WITH
SAMUEL LEUENBERGER

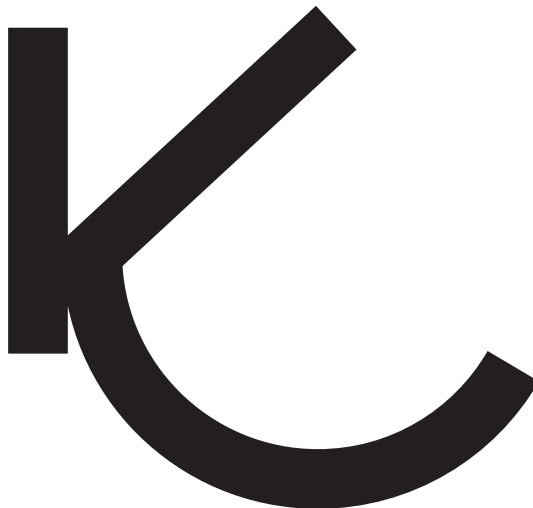
SL YOU WERE INVITED BY KURA., A
NEW EXHIBITION SPACE IN MILAN AND
ONE ARM OF THE CULTURAL ORGANISATION
OF CURA. MAGAZINE. THEY ARE BEING
HOSTED INSIDE THE FONDERIA ARTISTICA
BATTAGLIA. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR
THE EXHIBITION?

YS THE WORK AT FONDERIA ARTISTICA
BATTAGLIA REVOLVES AROUND A NEW
SCULPTURE CALLED BOY — IT'S THE
CONTINUATION OF A WORK THAT WAS
RECENTLY PRESENTED IN BERLIN. IT'S A
FIGURE THAT IS BASED ON AN IMAGE OF ME
AS A KID PULLED FROM A HOME MOVIE MY
PARENTS MADE IN 1991. THE SCULPTURE IS
CAST IN BRONZE BY FONDERIA ARTISTICA
BATTAGLIA AND PRESENTED AS THE FIRST
OPEN STUDIO RESIDENCY PROGRAM UNDER
THE ARTISTIC DIRECTION OF CURA.

SL BOY ISOLATES AN IMAGE FROM
MEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN THE EARLY YEARS
OF ITS DOMESTICATION. THE RISE OF
THE CULT CELEBRITY AND REALITY TV
OWES TO THESE ADVANCES IN VIDEO,
WHICH GRANTED THE CAMERA GREATER
ACCESS TO THE HOME AND BLURRED THE
REALMS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC. YOUR
INTEREST IN CELEBRITIES BEGAN A FEW
YEARS AGO. FOR BASEL'S PARCOURS IN
2015 YOU PRESENTED LITTLE MERMAID
— A PORTRAIT OF EMMA WATSON AS A
MERMAID — WHILE LEGOLAS AND VINCENT
PROVIDE MORE RECENT EXAMPLES. THE
HYPE SURROUNDING CELEBRITIES IS BASED
UPON WHAT WE KNOW OR GET TO KNOW
ABOUT THEM 'PERSONALLY'. BOY OPENLY
BRINGS THESE TWO ELEMENTS TOGETHER.
IN THE CASE OF EMMA WATSON, YOU EVEN
MERGE YOUR PORTRAIT WITH HERS.

YS YES, THAT WAS AN INTERESTING
WORK TITLED PORTRAITS, WHICH WAS PART
OF AN EXHIBITION CALLED OUR LIFE AT
GALLERI GOLSA IN OLSO. THE SHOW THAT
PLAYED WITH THE CONCEPT YOU MENTION
HERE OF MORPHING MY LIFE WITH A
FICTIONALISED VERSION AS A CELEBRITY.
OUR LIFE LOOKED AT THE RESULT OF
THESE TWO PARALLEL WORLDS COLLIDING.
THE POROSITY BETWEEN WHAT WE PRESENT
OUR LIVES TO BE (SAY, ON SOCIAL
MEDIA) AND WHAT OUR LIFE ACTUALLY
LOOKS LIKE IS REALLY INTERESTING. AT
WHAT POINT DOES PROJECTION BECOME
BELIEVABLE? AND TO WHAT EXTENT DO
OTHER PEOPLE'S PROJECTIONS INFORM
OUR DECISIONS? FOR ME, THAT'S REALLY
AT THE HEART OF WHAT CELEBRITIES
MEAN TO US CULTURALLY. THEY PROVIDE
A DREAM VERSION OF LIFE THAT WE
ASPIRE TO HAVE IN SOME ABSTRACT WAY.
WHERE ELSE CAN YOU FIND GUIDANCE AS
A YOUNG PERSON TODAY? FIRST AND MOST
OBSVIOUSLY IT'S OUR PARENTS BUT YOU
DON'T NECESSARILY WANT TO FOLLOW
IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS OR THEIR LIVES
BECOME A MEASURE OF WHAT YOU DON'T
WANT. YOU MIGHT FIND SOME GUIDANCE
IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT,
SUCH AS HAVING A MENTOR, THAT YOU
LOOK UP TO AND WHOSE LIFESTYLE YOU
RESPECT. AND HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO
BE IN LOVE? WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED
TO LOOK LIKE? WHEN SHOULD YOU
MARRY? HOW SHOULD YOU DRESS? WHAT
ABOUT CHEATING? THERE AREN'T CLEAR
ANSWERS FOR ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS,
BUT THERE ARE SOCIAL CONTOURS. THE
INFLUENCE OF HOLLYWOOD ON ALL OF
THIS IS WELL KNOWN, HOWEVER I'M MOST
INTERESTED IN HOW IT HAS SHIFTED THE
LINES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE. WHERE
IT'S NOT NECESSARILY THE CREATIVE
VISION OF A DIRECTOR THAT YOU SEE,
BUT THE CANDID OF A PEER'S LIFE

KURA.
YVES SCHERER
BOY
OPEN STUDIO RESIDENCY PROGRAM #01
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DECISION IF THAT MAKES SENSE. THE MENTIONED WORKS ARE PART OF THIS, AS IS A SHOW LIKE HONEY MOON AT THE SWISS INSTITUTE IN NEW YORK, WHICH AS A WHOLE WAS A SORT OF PAPARAZZI IMAGE OF ME AND EMMA WATSON ON OUR FICTITIOUS HONEY MOON.

SL WELL, IT'S A SORT OF ROLE-PLAY OR FANTASY GAME.

YS YES, EXACTLY! BUT MOST OF THESE FANTASY GAMES ARE NOW PLAYED ONLINE, WHERE YOU PARTICIPATE IN THESE WORLDS FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME. IT'S ALSO HOW CELEBRITIES INTERFACE A PUBLIC; THE RELATIONSHIP IS HEAVILY MEDIATED AND CONTROLLED. AFTER A WHILE I REALISED THAT IT'S EASY TO THROW BAD VIBES FROM A DISTANCE, SO I PLAYED WITH EXPOSING MYSELF WITHIN THIS VISUAL TRAP. BOY CAN BE READ WITHIN THESE PARAMETERS. IT'S SOMEHOW A GOOD DISTANCE DOWN THAT LINE ALREADY, YET AS A NUDE SELF-PORTRAIT IT FEELS SOMEWHAT VULNERABLE AND OPEN. IT ALSO FOLLOWS THE SOCIAL FIXATION ON CHARACTERISING STAGES, LIKE THE EDGE OF INNOCENCE AND PRE-ADOLESCENCE, WHICH MIGHT BE A NEW ENERGY IN MY WORK. MY FRIEND DANIEL WROTE AN INTERESTING ESSAY (BOYS & THE SEMBLANCE OF BOYHOOD) ABOUT SOME OF THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PUBERTY AND BOYHOOD IN RELATION TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THE #METOO MOVEMENT. IT'S A JAMES FRANCO LOVE LETTER AT THE SAME TIME SO IT SEEMED FITTING SOMEHOW AND WE PRESENTED IT FOR MY SHOW AT GALERIE GUIDO W. BAUDACH BACK IN JANUARY.

SL TALKING ABOUT INNOCENCE AND PUBERTY HERE, EVOLVING FROM BOY TO MAN AND BACK, WHAT ROLE DOES SEXUALITY PLAY IN YOUR WORK?

YS IT'S INTERESTING, BECAUSE A FEW YEARS BACK IT WAS MORE EXPLICIT OR MORE ADULT IN CONTENT. NOW IT'S THIS PINK PALACE, WHERE SEXUALITY IS A SITE OF FANTASY ITSELF. NEWER WORKS CHANNEL SOFT COLOURS AND ROSE PRINTED BED SHEETS.

SL NEVERTHELESS, THE PRESENTATION OF YOUR CHARACTERS OR PROXIES REMAINS PROVOCATIVE. LEGOLAS, EMMA WATSON, YOURSELF AND OTHERS ARE OFTEN NAKED.

YS IT'S TRUE FOR THE MOST PART, BUT VINCENT WEARS SHORTS :) IT'S VINCENT CASSEL IN VERY TIGHT UNDERWEAR WALKING ON A BEACH. I DO SEE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT I'M NOT NECESSARILY INTERESTED IN NUDITY, BUT THE ABSENCE OF CLOTHES. CLOTHES REPRESENT CULTURE: THE CLOTHED VS UNCLOTHED BODY IMMEDIATELY ANALOGISES A NATURE-CULTURE DICHOTOMY OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT. FROM THIS STANDPOINT, A SCULPTURE DEPICTING LEGOLAS DOESN'T REALLY NEED THE TRAPPINGS OF CULTURE: IT'S ALREADY A CULTURAL ARTEFACT. IT'S ORLANDO BLOOM WITH ALL THAT IS ATTACHED TO HIM AS A CELEBRITY. I WANTED TO PEEL BACK THE LAYERS OF THIS CONSTRUCT TO GET TO SOMETHING LIKE A NATURAL STATE, WHATEVER THIS MEANS EXACTLY. I'M NOT TRYING TO MAKE A FIGURE THAT COULD BE AT MADAME TUSSAUDS, BUT IT'S INTERESTING THAT NUDITY SHIFTS THE TONE QUITE DRAMATICALLY. WITH LEGOLAS FOR EXAMPLE — A MUSCLY GUY WITH THIS BOW — NUDITY SEEMS TO UNDERCUT HIS BRAVADO. HE'S SUDDENLY VULNERABLE TO SCRUTINY. WHAT IT MEANS FOR BOY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF BOYHOOD I HAVEN'T QUITE FIGURED OUT, BUT I LIKE HOW IT'S ALMOST UNTOUCHED BY CULTURE. IT'S THE FIRST SCULPTURE THAT I MADE IN THIS MODE THAT ISN'T A CELEBRITY. IT'S ME AS A BOY STANDING NAKED AND LOOKING UP AT THE SKY. BOY GESTURES TOWARD A BRIGHT FUTURE OR WHATEVER FANTASY IS INSERTED THERE.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM A LONGER INTERVIEW RECORDED ON 6 MARCH 2019, BETWEEN YVES SCHERER, NEW YORK AND SAMUEL LEUENBERGER, BERLIN.