

LEO HAZ

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Austrian Contemporary Artist · P21-PETing · Patent No. 509067

ARTIST STATEMENT — “MACHTHABER”

The “Machthaber” series places a PET skull — forged from the packaging waste of our daily consumption, aluminium and gold leaf — where the face of historical power once was. The skull is not a comment or a symbol of death. It is the accurate portrait of essence: power stripped of its costume, uniform, its gesture, its moustache, reduced to what every human being consists of beneath the skin. The works are made in Braunau am Inn, Austria, where the artist was born; Adolf Hitler was born two minutes from his studio. This is not coincidence exploited — it is geography taken seriously.

The series includes “Mona Corona” (the Gioconda with a PET cranium), “Bone Apart” (Napoleon on his horse, skull-faced), and four works titled after the neighbour two minutes away: “Mein Nachbar in Lederhosen,” “Mein Nachbar beim Predigen,” “Mein Nachbar beim Grüßen” und “Das Buch von meinem Nachbarn mit dem Titel: Mein Krampf,” each a period photograph from the archives, the face replaced by the same gleaming, golden-veined skull.

Art history knows this move. Hans Holbein the Younger hid an anamorphic skull in “The Ambassadors”. Haz makes it literal, democratic and plastic. Every “Machthaber” is a memento mori for the age of disposable packaging. Collecting the series means owning a decapitation of ideology – and a reminder that power, no matter how monstrous, begins and ends as a fragile, bone-headed human being. That is not symbolism. That is surveying. The good thing about Braunau is that you always know what you’re talking about.