

No Longer Endangered, But Vulnerable

Rob Pruitt

From 22.09.2022

MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present *No longer endangered, but vulnerable*, Rob Pruitt's second presentation in Hong Kong and eighth personal exhibition with the gallery since 2012.

Pruitt's vocabulary is straightforward, minimalist, and above all, highly relatable. Drawing on everyday iconography with sardonic irony, he confronts the viewer with the paradox of modern-day existence: one where the line between hope and dystopia is harder and harder to grasp.

Despite the glitter, the tone of the exhibition is far from lighthearted: indeed, the status of the panda, which was recently declared "no longer endangered, but vulnerable", echoes like a cautionary tale reminding us that the panda – and everything that it represents – is far from safe from further threats.

The Panda is a highly symbolic animal: not only was it adopted by China as its national animal, but this giant, fluffy bear acquired particularly iconic status in international diplomacy in the 1940's, in what became known as "Panda Diplomacy" – China gifting giant pandas to other countries in highly symbolic gestures of concord, goodwill and friendship.

The Panda paintings celebrate this world of contradictions: on the one hand the bright, colorful glittery portraits of these animals in their natural habitat, depicted in glitter to enhance their innocence and endearing expressions; on the other, they are a stark reminder of the tensions and dangers that we are grappling with both with increasing environmental catastrophes, as well as the precarity of our current geopolitical order. Vulnerability after danger should not be mistaken for safety.

Rob Pruitt was born in Washington D.C. in 1964 and studied at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington D.C. and Parsons School of Design in New York. He lives and works in New York. His work has been included in numerous museum solo exhibitions, including a recent exhibition at Rebuild Foundation, Chicago (2019); Kunsthalle Zurich, curated by Daniel Baumann, Zurich (2017); Brant Foundation, Greenwich, (2015); a mid-career retrospective at Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2013); Dallas Contemporary, Dallas (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2015); Kunstverein, Freiburg (2012); Le Consortium, Dijon (2002); and group shows such as: From Day to Day, de la Cruz Collection, Miami (2019); The Shadows Took Shape, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2013); Pop Life, Tate Modern (2009); Mapping the Studio, Punta Della Dogana/Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2009). In 2009, he debuted the Rob Pruitt's Annual Art Awards at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, an award show for the art world fashioned after the Oscars. In 2011, he was commissioned by the Public Art Fund to install The Andy Monument, a highly polished chrome sculpture of Andy Warhol (replete with shopping bags) in New York's Union Square, near the site of Warhol's Factory.