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MICHAEL FLIRI *Becomings*
ARTIST'S FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION IN THE UNITED STATES
November 10, 2016 – January 14, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 10, 6-8PM



Michael Fliri, *Where Do I End and the World Begins*, Artistone, varnish, steel and MDF, Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan, Italy, 511 x 118 x 118 inches (1300 cm x 300 x 300 cm)

Oct 21, 2016 – San Francisco – For Italian/German artist Michael Fliri's debut solo exhibition in the United States, *Becomings* features seven Artestone, paint, metal and MDF sculptural objects in the form of masks on finely crafted custom podiums. These works are from his series *Where Do I End and the World Begins*. Utilizing the collection of the International Mask Museum, Germany, as source material, the work inverts the mask as a sculptural object and redefines its meaning. These sculptures express a space between cultures or a moment in one's own personal evolution. They describe the process of building identity and the construction of personas. Fliri achieves this by casting the interior surface of traditional ethnic masks for use as the exterior of a new mask and then uses casts of the exterior of another culture's mask as the interior of the first mask. In this way, the artist inverts a cultural signifier of ritual and identity and enables a mask from Mexico to "look through" a Japanese mask, and the inside of a mask from Korea to be in contact with a mask from Tibet.

In reference to his sculptural masks, the artist describes their resonance as distinctly human yet uncannily alien. Fliri says "[I am] attracted to the concept of an animistic part of objects." These works are simultaneously mysterious, supernatural, and soulful. The ritual nature of these original masks imprinted their energy and magic on the objects when they were cast. They now evoke the subconscious and feel in-between states of being, like on the edge between sleeping and waking.

This series further advances the concept of identity politics surrounding assimilation and Diaspora in the 21st century. In light of today's political climate, globalization, and rising sense of cultural isolationism, these masks are timely and poignant investigations into cultural shifts and the global refugee/migration crisis.

ABOUT MICHAEL FLIRI

Michael Fliri was born in South Tyrol, Italy in 1978 and lives and works between Zurich, Switzerland and South Tyrol, Italy. Completing studies at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna and Kunstakademie in Munich, he pursued additional advanced certificate courses at the Kunstakademiet Bergen in Norway, via the Erasmus study program and intensive study in Filmmaking at New York University.

Largely performative, Fliri utilizes costumes, physical actions, gestures and situations to explore the concept of transformations. As a conceptual artist his sculpture, photography, performance, and video, exhibited in solo and group exhibitions throughout Europe, including but not limited to exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany; Hangar Bicocca, Milan, Italy; Macro Contemporary Art Museum Rome, Italy; Fondazione Merz Turin, Italy; Museion, Bolzano, Italy; Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria; Mart, Rovereto, Italy; Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Austria; Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Austria; Biennale di Mosca, Russia; Maison Particulière, Brussels, Belgium; Contour Video Biennial, Belgium; and Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan, Italy. He has been awarded with prestigious residencies like the Dena Foundation at the Centre des Récollets a Paris, France, AIR (Artist in Residence) Antwerp selected by Ohno Corporation of Needcompany, Belgium, Vienna City Residency by the Ministry of Culture, Austria; the ZF Art Award Friedrichshafen, Germany; Premio VAF-Feierabend, Germany; Special Honor Award for the International Performance Prize (handed over by Marina Abramovic), Italy.

ABOUT GALLERY WENDI NORRIS

Gallery Wendi Norris presents a contemporary and modern program that showcases artists working over many geographic locations and in a wide array of media. Gallery Wendi Norris is active locally as well as internationally, working with collectors and museums alike in both primary and secondary markets. Founded with an emphasis on scholarship and education, the gallery produces researched exhibition catalogues, sponsors artist talks, hosts visiting academics, and engages in local public art projects, among other initiatives. Learn more at gallerywendinorris.com.
