



Over more than three decades, Olaf Metzel has produced an artistic oeuvre that manifests as sharp comments on current social and political affairs. Conceived as three-dimensional images of our time, his sculptures and sculptural interventions in public space critically engage with topical issues such as migration, asylum policy, social inequality, the bank crisis, political violence and state control, and the esthetics of protest.

Avalanche, the sculptor's first solo exhibition in Denmark, will present a selection of works from 1990 to today. For *ichhasseschule* (I hate school, 2010), Metzel worked with school classes from different social backgrounds. For this project, the teenagers were allowed to express their creativity where it is usually forbidden in school, by writing and drawing on the furniture. The wildly decorated desks and chairs are presented as a room-filling installation, substituted by desk tops that are mounted onto the wall, ironically alluding to traditional panel painting. In a side room, an edition is shown that is based on an installation that Metzel originally realized for the 1990 Biennial of Sydney, curated by René Block. It consists of metal cabinets that are individually arranged and partly destroyed (*Bond Store Lockers*, 1990). In the main hall, white, green, brown and blue glass bottles appear to be forcibly broken and then hammered into the wall. The decorativeness of the colorful glass is thwarted by the aesthetic of violence (*Alles Flaschen*, 1992/2015). In the center of the room stands the work *Milieufragen* (2007): 24 urinals of the kind that one used to find in public toilets, but that are today forbidden for hygienical reasons through an enactment by the European Union, are installed back to back in two rows. Even if Duchamp did not directly inspire the work, one immediately thinks of the grandfather of Concept Art. But Metzel's urinals are not Ready-mades, but sculptures – replicas of the original cast in concrete. Therefore, their apparent contamination is not the result of vandalism, but a quotation of *Informel*, a style of abstract painting.

Avalanche, a new series of aluminum sculptures was specially conceived for this exhibition. The title comes from the vanguard art magazine *Avalanche*, published in New York in the 1970ies, that

Metzel found on Møn in the archive of curator and collector René Block – a leftover from his time as a gallerist in New York. For these sculptures that are made from hand-folded, digitally printed metal sheets, Metzel uses motives taken from print media such as newspapers, sometimes also from the context of art. Olaf Metzel says about this process: „I was always interested in the excessive possibilities of sculpture. Essential hereby is the resistance of the material. If one folds a plate of light metal several times, it becomes astonishingly stable, to a degree that cannot be increased. When the surface is printed it becomes delicate, so that it can only be formed by hand, not with a machine. The intended lightness is achieved when the relief looks like crumbled paper.“

Olaf Metzel

1952 Berlin; lives and works in Munich

Olaf Metzel studied at the Free University and the College for Applied Arts in Berlin. Since 1990 he has been professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he also served as rector 1995–99. He has participated in numerous exhibitions in Germany and abroad, including *documenta 8*, Münster Sculpture Projects (1987 and 1997), the Sydney Biennial (1990), Istanbul Biennial (1995) and the São Paulo Biennial (2002). Metzel's prizes include the Villa Massimo Prize (Rome, 1987), the Kurt Eisner Prize (Munich, 1990), the Arnold Bode Prize (Kassel, 1994), Wilhelm Loth Prize (Darmstadt, 1997), the Ernst Barlach Prize (Hamburg, 2001), the Art Prize of the City of Munich (2005), the Lichtwark Prize (Hamburg, 2010), and the mfi Prize for Art in the Public Domain (Essen, 2014). Public sculptures by Olaf Metzel can be seen in Germany, Europe and Asia. Metzel has curated many international exhibitions and published numerous contributions in newspapers and magazines. He is the author as well as the editor of the publication *Basisarbeit* and the exhibition catalogue *Circus Wols*. Most recently published has been the catalogue *From the TV to the Fridge*, edited by Kunstraum Innsbruck 2015.