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10.06

-

23.07

2022

OPENING

09.06

6PM - 9PM

ENRICO BAJ

MARTIN KERSELS

HOME SWEET HOME

At first glance, there may not seem to be any connection between American artist **Martin Kersels** (born 1960 in Los Angeles; lives and works in New Haven, Connecticut) and Italian painter **Enrico Baj**, born 35 years before him (Milan, 1924–Vergiate, 2003). They do not belong to the same generation, are not from the same country, do not work in the same medium, nor employ the same artistic techniques. Nothing except a common interest: both artists have produced a series of furniture pieces, some of which are brought together for this exhibition where Baj's paintings on the walls (the series is dated 1960 – 1962) respond to Kersels's sculptures on the floor (works realized especially for this new solo show). (...)

The rejection of authority that marked Enrico Baj's personality early on is matched by the profoundly anti-authoritarian work of Martin Kersels.



Enrico Baj, Console, 1961



Martin Kersels, Orbit Chair, 2021

Thirty-five years separate the two artists, brought together here through their respective furniture series. This connection shows that the two men have much more in common than it may appear. Although they do not share the same artistic style or conception of art, the elder Baj still needs a picture rail to hang his paintings, while the younger Kersels creates work "that you don't put on a wall or in a vitrine." They share a similar political taste that makes their artistic production a plea against bourgeois art. By choosing the absurd and the grotesque as the expression of their work, they denounce the conformism of their society. The furniture they represent is dented, wobbly, refashioned, twisted. Out of their anthropomorphic fragility arises a resistance to conservatism that asserts the right to be different, to be precarious, to fall. While expressing it in different ways but always with humour, whether cynical or nostalgic, Enrico Baj and Martin Kersels drop the masks that each of us wears as we perform a social comedy in which pretence and hypocrisy triumph.