

MICHAEL BAUER

BORWASSER



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FIRST MONOGRAPH

Reminiscent of the bizarre anthropomorphic portraits of 16th-century painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Michael Bauer's work creates figurative composites from abstraction and design. Grotesque and distorted conglomerations of doodled elements, gray and muddy forms entangle as abject viscera; lumpy scar tissue, withering penises, and slithery dead matter converge as psychological landscape, and forlorn memento mori.

Bauer uses the qualities of abstract painting as a deviation of representational portraiture, allowing the media to replicate the characteristics of physical matter. Traces of recognizable features, such as eyes and hands, give uneasy relation to celiac smears, scabby encrustations, and fluid brush marks, each rendered with a pristine delicacy. Offset by harlequin ornamentation and elegant touches of primavera color, Bauer's reductive palette creates an antiquarian reverence, setting his absurd conceptions as icons of protracted contemplation.

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