



## FULL METAL CRASH

### Pierre-Alain Mürger solo exhibition

April 13 – May 11, 2024

*Opening Reception with the Artist | Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> @ 6-10pm*

**Laurent Marthaler Contemporary** and **Fabien Castanier Gallery** are excited to present, "FULL METAL CRASH", a solo exhibition for contemporary Swiss artist, Pierre-Alain Mürger. This exhibition consists of a unique selection of sculptural pieces imbued with layers of meaning and intention. With a method of destruction ultimately one of a kind, the artist sends automobiles crashing into sheets of metal to create his work. The resulting pieces express a complex and spontaneous map of force, sculpted into the medium with the most unexpected paint brush.

With a long-standing fascination with cars, Pierre-Alain Mürger has developed his interest in the destruction and deformation of form into an artistic practice. Having spent years researching car crashes and the practical engineering results of kinetic force on a metal body, the artist conducts crash tests in which automobiles move at up to 70 mph into painted metal. A process that requires hours of planning and preparation, the method and execution become part of the art as much as the final sculptural product. The crashes are filmed and documented and witnessed by a number of spectators who contribute to the piece's performative nature. Every step in the creation adds dimensional weight to the work's narrative. From planning stages to the eventual imprint, each bend and dent formed into the metal plate tells a dynamic story. The technique is controlled, such as the speed and the angle at which the car crashes, but the ultimate result is unique and impossible to reproduce. Mürger says, "I provoke just enough for the work to exist and come to fruition. I provide the impetus."

Exploring the idea of deformation by force, the artist considers the destruction a re-arrangement rather than an elimination of essence. Like a sculptor creating from a block of marble, Mürger removes the function of the original medium, an automobile in this case, and yet retains the imprint of its symbolism and thus keeps a trace reflection of the vehicle's spirit. The stamp of the car's brand remains in the final piece – the grills and headlights framing logos such as Cadillac, BMW, and Mercedes Benz. Symbolic of wealth and status, the familiar emblems and forms also indicate the concepts of freedom, movement, and independence. These shapes crushed into the metal evoke strongly informed imagery. The ubiquitousness of automobiles and the cultural impact of such tools on everyday modern life means that his work presents an intentional provocation of the connection between man and machine.




Manipulating metal plates with the same effect as the crashes, the artist also utilizes a large-scale embossing technique to shape his metallic canvases with bold text. The painted metal contains myriad contours and wrinkles that tell the story of its creation. The words – "DRIVE", "HOPE", or "BUY" – alongside the pieces derived from car impacts, create a series that explores the way in which material can retain echoes of force. The chaos of the artistic process hides in plain sight upon the medium, as ripples in the metal stretch out from the points of contact. The smooth or reflective texture of the metal is ultimately cleaned of dirt or detritus, the final form appears spontaneous but not disordered. The sharp and defined edges of the plates convey a sense of control. His pieces are at once tactile and kinetic, a snapshot captured in time where the material is frozen upon the moment of impact – artefacts preserving an implication of tremendous energy.

Currently living and working in Solothurn, Switzerland, Pierre-Alain Mürger studied at the Biel School of Visual Arts. He worked in a small business where he learned to manipulate and craft with metal and later worked as an assistant to sculpture artist Carlo Borer where he discovered and developed his own artistic endeavors. He continues to explore multimedia techniques and participates in solo and group exhibitions across Europe.

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A catalog of work is available. Please contact the gallery for any press inquiries.

Socials :  @castaniergallery  /Fabien Castanier Gallery  @FCGallery