

WIELS

Klara Lidén

29 October 2015 – 10 January 2016

Preview & public opening: Wednesday 28 October

Curated by Zoë Gray

Klara Lidén's solo exhibition at WIELS is her first institutional presentation in Belgium. It comprises new and existing works in a range of media, with an emphasis on video and installation. Occupying the first floor gallery spaces, the exhibition is structured to create a variety of tempos, drawing the visitor slowly into Lidén's intense interior world.

Lidén's work provokes a search for adjectives, which might at first seem contradictory: violent yet reticent, humorous yet painful, personal yet universal. Influenced by street art, informed by conceptual art, and tinged with vandalism, her creative process takes many forms. Her materials are taken from her immediate urban environment and her subjects from her own experience of living as an individual in a crowd.



In her videos, Lidén often appears alone. Even when other people feature, it is as if she inhabits a different time zone, or operates at a different speed from the rest of society. For example, for her 2014 video *Warm-up*, she filmed herself rehearsing with the ballet corps of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, clumsily attempting to copy the graceful moves of the ballerinas as they *plier* across the stage.

As this work reveals, Lidén has a strong sense of bathos. She revels in the comedic, sometimes even tragicomic effect of shifting tone between the sublime and the ridiculous. In the two videos from 2010-2011 included in the exhibition (one untitled, the other titled *Toujours être ailleurs*), we see the artist respectively clamped up a concrete column and up a lamppost, in a bleak, urban setting. There is something somewhat desperate in her monkey-like pose, as if she is clinging on for dear life. As the videos progress, she slides very gradually down, the movement so slow as to be almost imperceptible.

In her video *Untitled (Trashcan)*, also from 2011, we see her sitting at a desk in an otherwise virtually empty space. Listening to music from computer speakers placed on the desk in front of her, she resembles a bored gallery assistant with little to do. Then,

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quite unexpectedly, she stands up, walks to the large rubbish bin next to her desk, and climbs inside, disappearing entirely from view. The humour of the work is nevertheless unsettling, as we cannot help but make a psychological reading of her decision to throw herself in the garbage.



Lidén's practice also comprises works made from recuperated materials. Her ongoing series *Poster Paintings* (2007-) are wall-mounted works made from layers of posters pasted atop one another, which she takes from the street, blocking out the top image with a white rectangle. Highlighting the omnipresence of advertising in public space, while also referencing post-minimalist painting, they are enigmatic objects, equally at home in a gallery space or the urban landscape.

Her exhibition at WIELS will feature a new large-scale installation of forms whose status hovers somewhere between furniture and sculpture. An extension of an installation she showed recently at Galerie Neu (Berlin), the work is made from recuperated wooden planks and concrete paving slabs. The forms are placed in several small, almost sociable groups, as if they are tables and benches inviting us to gather around them. The concrete surface is marked with lines of vivid pink spray-paint, recalling the way that workmen mark sites for future interventions in the street. The diagonal grid drawn by these lines intersects with the right-angled grid of the structures. Another layer is added to the installation by a flotilla of empty plastic jerrycans, suspended from the ceiling and each lit from inside. These translucent white cubes hover above the visitors heads in a fashion that is simultaneously welcoming and somewhat menacing.



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Karl Holmqvist (artist, poet and frequent collaborator of Lidén's) described these works as "performing a kind of drag performance of shifting meaning and presence. A double meaning and absent presence. They're heavy and 'there,' yet somehow quite invisible, in your face and looking tough but still somehow avoiding your gaze even in the ultra lit-up and stage-like interior of contemporary art gallery."

Biography

Born in Sweden in 1979, Klara Lidén lives and works in Berlin.

Recent solo exhibitions include Le Consortium, Dijon and Galerie Neu, Berlin (both 2015); Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen and Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York (both 2014); Museion, Bolzano and Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2013); New Museum, New York (2012); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2011); Serpentine Gallery, London, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn and Jeu de Paume, Paris (all 2010); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009); Hayward Gallery, London (2007).

Lidén received the Prize for Sculpture from the Moderna Museet (2013); Carnegie Art Award (2012); Special mention for the 54th International Art Exhibition ILLUMInations, Venice Biennale (2011).

She studied at Konstfack in Stockholm (2004-2007); Universität der Kunst, Berlin (2003); School of Architecture, Royal School of Technology, Stockholm (2000-2004).