

BERGEN KUNSTHALL

MAGALI REUS

HOT COTTONS

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3 NOVEMBER 2017 – 7 JANUARY 2018

Hot Cottons is Dutch artist Magali Reus' first solo exhibition in Scandinavia, and her largest solo exhibition to date. The exhibition features a comprehensive group of new sculptures, presented within a bespoke exhibition architecture that reveals itself through a series of spatial chapters.

Magali Reus creates sculptural objects that are seemingly recognizable, often appropriating the symbolism of ordinary objects from our immediate surroundings. In the detailed and meticulously produced surfaces of the sculptures, conventionally analogue gestures have been enhanced with complex casting and moulding techniques: autographs of famous athletes, graphics from an iconic Norwegian matchbox, as well as ornaments and details from architecture and industrial design. Throughout, there is a flourish of mechanisation relocated to the hand-touched and vice versa. The result is objects that appear with an unclear, unsteady identity; between the commonplace and the hyper real.

Reus relates to seeing by studying the slightest details in the world that surrounds us. She introduces a distance and a delay in the reading of objects and images. Images do not necessarily coincide with their expected material properties. The objects appear mediated and modified, just as our screen-based culture's rendering of reality is always an edited – and often manipulated – version of the world.

The exhibition at Bergen Kunsthall consists of several new series of works. As an opening work, a large desk-like composition is a sculptural obstacle reminiscent of a façade or hoarding (*Crane*, 2017). Set within the modified architecture of the Kunsthall itself, this device becomes an echo of the building's foyer hall. Like a repeated welcoming gesture, the sculpture uses the language of soft display, but without the conventional

clerk or initiatory dialogue of the 'real' exhibition desk. The sculpture is composed from numerous sections of cast and milled material, its surfaces smooth and cleanly pastel, yet clearly relative to the impermanence of a site under construction. Quoting the possibility for modular expansion, the implication is that purposeful activity might be unfolding at a remove. The work is over-sized and unmanned, working like a ship whose anchor ties every subsequent gesture back to its beginning symbols; these smaller details and their material conceits echo across the exhibition. Here, the motifs are of nomadic bodies or psychic states in transit: mattress springs, magazine covers, archaeological fragments. Visibly fixed to the work in a way that appears both haphazard and survivalist, the context is one of split fictions: those that speak of invisible past events and those that lay the seeds of visual rhymes yet to be seen. *Crane* therefore suggests that the information stored in this unit might be extracted and used as an operational manual for the exhibition as a whole. The sculpture implies a provisional dialogue with a matrix of external worlds: from the habitual yet aspirational lifestyle of a young and mostly absent day-worker to the more sinister control of a globally dispersed corporation.

Dispersed throughout the exhibition, another architectural 'body' both interrupts and unfolds the narrative of the spaces. The *Hwael* series (2017) consists of different 'sections', seemingly broken off from a larger whole and distributed through the exhibition galleries in the rhetorical manner of a fragmented whale skeleton. The effect is ruinous, yet in progress. Proportionally and visually analogous to the skeletal framework of the public bus, these metal structures reference the supply of movement (of both body and machine) through urban

space. The "bones" of these sculptures are left unclad, raw in the sense of the fleshless rib cage of a beached and long desiccated whale.

Hwael employs the visual language of both classical decorative ironwork and ergonomic kit manufacture. Mounted on the skeletal frameworks, the visual motif of a backpack acts as a signifier for the transport of goods of an undisclosed content. As a thing the bag represents a typological form whose manifestations, despite endless variations, share the mutual properties of bodily connection and mimicry: the outside shell, like our skin, is a protective membrane for the non-uniform content of the insides. This "backpack" form was designed using a 3-dimensional computer program, thus allowing subtle manipulations of size and format within the conditions of a universally recognizable program.

Like cells undergoing subtle metamorphoses of shape or purpose, the backpacks feel isolated to the display functions of each particular work's theme, yet also complicit links in an overall program of biomorphic unity. The details on their external faces (typefaces, embroidery work, embossed typographic molding) in turn add flourishes to this formal language, embellishments that force the importance of distinct character or personifying gestures within the set template.

Throughout the exhibition, a number of works are integrated directly into the exhibition architecture. From the subtle modifications of the existing architecture itself (curved walls; debossed numbers), to wall mounted works and correspondence with doorways or roofing. The *Sentinel* series (2017) shares certain characteristic features with the commonplace fire extinguisher. Hanging on the wall and strictly installed beside each entrance or doorway, these works are again markers of potential utility. The fire extinguisher is a conceptually beautiful composition: a contained unit of pressure and liquid that is rarely mobilized but frequently repurposed (to prop open doors – or, in the case of hoses and inset units, to instill calm and security). Composed of both cast and individually woven textile sections, Reus'sculptural 'fire extinguishers' are hung alongside brackets that appear to be in a molten or liquid state. The heat conventionally associated with these extinguishing devices, is thus implicit in their making. Embroidered and engraved text coupled with airbrushed

image detail adds surface decoration reminiscent of branding or instruction manual graphics. Using bespoke weaving methods for the fabrication of the 'fire hose', the textile quality of the work will connect with other hand woven details within the exhibition. This composite mix of slow thoughtfulness of the weave and utilitarian economy of the fiberglass and metals further reinforces the complex change of speed and attention common to all works in this exhibition.

In *Hot Cottons*, all works appear to the viewer in a state of unfolding motion, in transition between different temporal stages; frozen in the process of becoming (mid-render), caught in the midst of a function (mid-use), or in a state of restoration, ruin or abandonment.

There is frequent multiplication in Reus' works. Throughout the exhibition, variations on similar objects appear; in different places, on different scales and with varying degrees of detail. Like teeth, bricks or rows of houses, they enact the formal grammar of an object obviously connected to a larger and more purposeful system or logic. Her work considers the way comic exaggeration or stylized appropriation can shift the rhythm of the decoding of a surface by a viewer. Over-sized or imitative forms might therefore be said to be performing, and in this way Reus' work can be linked with conversations of material flirtatiousness, of sexuality or gender.

The extensive production of new works that makes up *Hot Cottons* will also appear in her subsequent exhibition at the South London Gallery in 2018.

Magali Reus (b. 1981, The Hague) lives and works in London.

Commissioned and produced by Bergen Kunsthall and the South London Gallery. Supported by the Mondriaan Fund and Arts Council Norway.

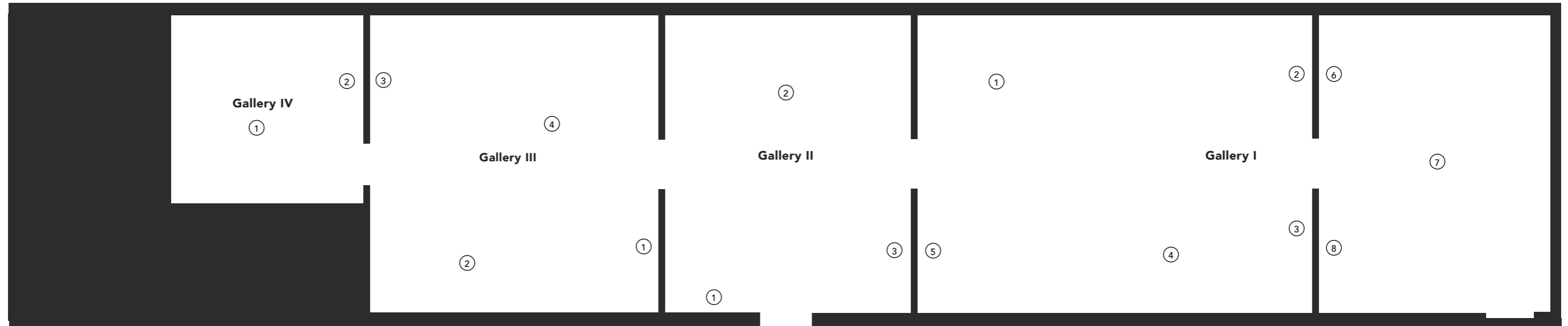
The exhibition at Bergen Kunsthall is curated by Martin Clark and Steinar Sekkingstad. The exhibition at the South London Gallery is curated by Margot Heller.

A new publication will be co-published by Bergen Kunsthall and the South London Gallery in 2018.



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GALLERY IV

- 1 **Hwael (The Flat), 2017**
Powder-coated aluminium and steel, fiberglass and polyester resin, pigments, custom embroidered cotton webbing, engraved aluminium, laser cut felt, socket bolts and nuts, aluminium powder, laser cut aluminium and steel, laser cut C-type print, laser cut and engraved acrylic, Jesmonite
- 2 **Sentinel (Latchtail), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast iron, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated steel and aluminium, leather cord, magnets

GALLERY III

- 1 **Sentinel (Waterfall Plot), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast bronze, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated steel and aluminium
- 2 **Hwael (Doric Order), 2017**
Powder-coated aluminium and steel, fiberglass and polyester resin, sand blasted polyester resin, pigments, cork chips, custom embroidered cotton webbing, engraved aluminium, laser cut cork sheet, socket bolts and nuts, laser cut C-type prints, laser cut acrylic, laser cut and airbrushed steel, coated wire, tie straps
- 3 **Sentinel (Vesuvio), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast aluminium, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated steel and aluminium, rubber, engraved aluminium
- 4 **Hwael (Butter Side Of Bread), 2017**
Powder-coated aluminium and steel, fiberglass and polyester resin, pigments, custom embroidered cotton webbing, engraved aluminium, laser cut felt, socket bolts and nuts, polyurethane rubber, Jesmonite, iron filings, laser cut aluminium, custom embroidered Hessian

GALLERY II

- 1 **Sentinel (Rosewood), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast aluminium, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated aluminium
- 2 **Crane, 2017**
Fiberglass, polyester resin, pigments, sprayed plywood, resin encased rubble sacks, sandblasted polyester resin, powder coated steel, Jesmonite, laser-cut and engraved acrylic, laser cut C-type print, socket bolts and nuts
- 3 **Sentinel (Adder), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast aluminium, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated steel and aluminium

GALLERY I

- 1 **Hwael (Soft Soap), 2017**
Powder-coated aluminium and steel, fiberglass and polyester resin, pigments, custom embroidered cotton webbing, engraved aluminium, laser cut felt, socket bolts and nuts, wood veneer marquetry, airbrushed aluminium tube, leather cord, laser cut aluminium, PVC, cotton
- 2 **Great Lakes 482, 2017**
Fiberglass, polyester resin, pigments, laser cut cork sheet, powder coated aluminium, socket bolts and nuts, Jesmonite
- 3 **Streams 29,1529, 2017**
Fiberglass, polyester resin, pigments, laser cut cork sheet, powder coated aluminium, socket bolts and nuts, Jesmonite
- 4 **Hwael (Wheelbarrow), 2017**
Powder-coated aluminium and steel, fiberglass and polyester resin, pigments, custom embroidered cotton webbing, engraved aluminium, laser cut cork sheet, socket bolts and nuts, polyurethane rubber, aluminium powder, laser cut aluminium, polyester fabric, laser engraved leather, laser cut aluminium, nylon
- 5 **Sentinel (Tuxedo), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast iron, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated steel and aluminium, laser cut and engraved acrylic

- 6 **Sentinel (Kraken), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast bronze, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, powder coated steel and aluminium, leather cord, magnets
 - 7 **Hwael (Fully Automatic Time), 2017**
Powder-coated aluminium and steel, fiberglass and polyester resin, pigments, custom embroidered cotton webbing, engraved aluminium, laser cut felt, socket bolts and nuts, Jesmonite, airbrushed aluminium
 - 8 **Sentinel (Chestnuts), 2017**
Sprayed fiberglass and polyester resin, air brushed aluminium, embroidered custom weave viscose, polyester and cotton, sand cast aluminium, laser engraved leather, cotton twine, sprayed MDF, C-type print, acrylic
- BILLBOARD**
- B **Untitled Billboard, 2017**
213 x 309 cm.