

Esben Weile Kjær
Keep it Real
July 15–27, 2022

In *Keep it Real* at Magic Stop, three Tinker Bells are falling down, unaided by the magic of Neverland or the lightness of an animated body. Held up by metal frames and sand bags, they will never make it all the way down. But if they could, a sprinkle of pixie dust, stricken by gravity, would be there to catch them.

The Tinker Bells in this exhibition are made of laser cut steel plates, hand painted by a sign painter to convey three flustered renderings of the fairy from the 1953 animated version of *Peter Pan*. Tinker Bell is a fairy but also a tinkerer, who builds and fixes metal pots and utensils, and demonstrates one of the widest emotional gamuts within the Disney character landscape. This leads her to more mishaps than her compatriots: she works, creates, takes risks, makes mistakes, flies and falls. In 2013, Disney canceled the seventh installment of her movie franchise because “sales of DVDs had slowed down and the merchandise wasn’t selling as strongly as they wanted,”¹ resulting in layoffs and disused labor. All the more reasons to get mad when you’ve worked as a supporting character for over a century, a sultry icon for underage patrons, and a craftswoman with magical powers, materialized through paper, celluloid, merch and pixels.

The rounded vitrine of Magic Stop affords the viewer a panoramic view of the installation, including the back and sides of the apparatus that keeps it up. Seen from the outside, *Keep it Real* stands amid a transient world of seasonal shop windows, disposable party decorations, overly sexualized female figures, customized bus stops, and advertisements posing as urban decor. On the inside, an ominous soundtrack, a remix of a remix² accompanies Tinker Bell as she tumbles through the air of the space and out of public imagination. This is one of the artist’s first shows since graduating from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, and the second solo exhibition at Magic Stop.

Mona Varichon

1. <http://animationguildblog.blogspot.com/2013/10/at-diz-toons.html>

2. “Grieg: Peer Gynt (Death of Aase) - Solomon Grey’s Paradise Lost Remix (Rework)”

Magic Stop

www.magicstop.art
hi@magicstop.art

édicule de la Maladière
Av. de Montoie
1007 Lausanne
46.517618, 6.604496

Installation components

Three hand-painted steel sculptures

Sand bags

Confetti

Sound

Esben Weile Kjær (b. 1992) lives and works in Copenhagen. He is educated at the Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Music Management and recently graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. His practice involves different media such as sculpture, video, and performance, addressing themes like experience economy, generational anxiety, and the influence of pop culture on the community. Esben Weile Kjær has performed at several European venues and at a number of major Danish art institutions and festivals.

Mona Varichon is an artist and translator living in Paris and New York City. She wonders where and for whom artworks live, and whether her work can exist online or in a community before it exists in a gallery or museum. Her writing has appeared in Flash Art, Artforum and Dear Friends, the email column of artist Max Grau.

Magic Stop is an exhibition and research space based in Lausanne, Switzerland. Situated in édicule de la Maladière, it aims to support contemporary practices such as visual art, music, performance, and theory, allowing for a plurality of discourses on contemporary creation.

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