

TITLE: The Smashed Society

ARTIST: Georg Óskar

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L21 Gallery proposes a solo exhibition by Georg Óskar in Room 1 of S'Escorxador.

A painting project across 7 canvases. Like in a musical suite, the Icelandic artist presents a solid and vibrant corpus of work. Despite the clear references between one painting and another, in the end they all retain their autonomy and irreducible uniqueness. The measurements of these paintings relate to the artist's body as Georg Óskar's practice consists of a continuous physical encounter with painting. Assault, waiting and starting again.

Characters from the Disney universe are often the starting point for the artist. In 1971, Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart published in Valparaiso, Chile, "How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic", in which they effectively analyse this imaginary, highlighting its profoundly ideological and far from innocent message.

Donald Duck is now immersed in the painting, as is Georg Óskar.

The sentences we find in his canvases work as his iconic characters. Like didascalias, ironic and insightful, they move us without taking us anywhere. They frame and sometimes complete the composition. They are hooks, like the neon signs in bars or nightclubs...

Both linguistic resources, text and popular iconography, share an ambiguous attitude, leaving us waiting, attentive to what is happening on the canvas.

An effective strategy for capturing the viewer's gaze and thus bringing us closer to the surface of the canvas. That is what matters, the battlefield, or rather, the ocean of painting: unrealistic and impossible. And yet so attractive. It is there that Georg Óskar deploys all his arsenal of resources, techniques, gestures, colours, materials, silences and screams, crossings and rhythms, tensions and pauses. The painting is the protagonist. So let's not lose sight of it!

Óskar's efforts and research are dedicated to pure painting. He assaults the canvas with enthusiasm, without that paralysing respect (quite understandable, by the way, when faced with such an unreal task). He starts the paintings without thinking, he throws himself into the water and the mud, with or without fear.

Engaging in a body-to-body relationship with the painting, moving forward, looking precisely and waiting for just the right thing. Two steps forward, one step back. Gestures and colours, oil and acrylic, more experimental materials, trusting in that instinct that has long been trained like a muscle. Painting without previous sketches, waiting for something to happen on the surface of the canvas. Surrendering to this process is like setting out into the open sea; each blank canvas is a journey that begins.

The various possibilities of painting are voyages and, despite its immense tradition, there are still waves, icebergs, tides and many winds to explore and master (admitting that the latter stage is reachable).

Georg Óskar follows a method of trusting his instinct. A kind of controlled chaos or, in other words, a rehearsed improvisation. He surrenders himself to the liquid materiality of this medium with that boldness that is so necessary to sink completely. When he begins a canvas, Óskar leaves the safe harbour and gives himself up to his own personal journey. Our artist risks shipwreck, because only then will it have been worth all the effort. It is difficult to recognise small achievements in a subject with so many possible variations, when even the separation between figuration and abstraction ceases to make sense. To save oneself is not important, defeat in the face of painting is an inevitable experience. What is important is to get so far into the subject that all seems lost and sometimes manage to save the painting. The vision of the abyss, inside the painting, is like inhabiting a storm. There are cases in which everything flows organically, when the winds are with you, then all that remains is to rejoice in your lucky star. And then return to the blank canvas, once again, waiting for something to happen. Honestly.

Body to body with painting. There are good days and bad days. Getting into painting and surrendering blindly to its practice is like descending into an abyss of purity and unreality. Assault, waiting and starting again.

Francesco Giaveri