

# Golsa

MOTLEY ARTIFACTS

06.01. - 28.01.

Jan Freuchen  
Linda Lerseth  
Johanne Hestvold

Golsa is delighted to present the group exhibition MOTLEY ARTIFACTS, featuring works by Jan Freuchen, Linda Lerseth, and Johanne Hestvold. The exhibition offers a perspective into how the works of the three artists explore contemporary cultural and social iconography through items that speak to the often ambiguous relationship between local and global cultures. Incorporating new and previously exhibited works by the artists in the show, encompassing sculpture, drawing, and embroidery, the exhibition deals with ideas about the value of everyday objects, our complex relationship with the mundane, and how arbitrary the line between the permanent and the throwaway may be.

In the age of overproduction of expendable goods, now more than ever, everyday objects may seem replaceable and cookie-cutter. We may downplay the significance of these objects, but if an item is omnipresent and used regularly, can it be trivial? All manufactured items offer some insight into the culture that created them, making them cultural or social artifacts. In other words, they are objects that reveal information about a culture or the way of living within a given period in human history.

In *Isolation (The Humble Administrator's Garden) Cast* (2021), Johanne Hestvold transforms a familiar takeout food box into a patinated bronze sculpture. The chosen material elevates the image of the takeout box from something disposable to an object worth considering, both for its form and properties. At the same time, it highlights how pre-packaged, atomized, personalized consumer goods have become ubiquitous in contemporary life. Hestvold covers the sculpture in Ganoderma fungus in the pre-casting process. The result is a bronze cast with the organic properties of the fungus imprinted on the material for good, thus highlighting the interplay between the manufactured object and its biological properties, from which no human interference can separate it. It inevitably harkens back to the memory of the place it came from and to which it will return.

The sculpture is not hollow: the internal portion of the cast, open to our view, features a map of a park. A park is a place of gathering created by people for people. Even though their existence implies closeness to nature, contemporary gardens and parks are inevitably manufactured: curated with pathways, rows of planted trees, perfectly manicured bushes, benches and lights, water features, etc. Thus, they are a unique testament to culture, revealing how we facilitate and promote social interaction. By placing the outdoor, public space inside the box, Hestvold challenges our notions about the private and communal spheres of life and their function.

The six ink and gouache works on paper from the *Elektrifisert sokkel* series (2022) by Jan Freuchen feature a visual motif that has been a red thread in the artist's works for many years – shredded paper placed in an arrangement on a photocopy machine, thus preserved. This reproduction and its dynamic placement on the paper fashions a ghostly version of it, sealing it in our mind long after we have disposed of its physical counterpart. On the other hand, the pattern of the spiral, drawn in bold, nearly fluorescent color, is placed front and center. The spiral is an ancient symbol emerging in prehistoric times. As a longtime fascination of artists from Leonardo da Vinci to Louise Bourgeois to Alexander Calder, it is often tied to ideas about life, nature, and the universe. In Freuchen's vision, the image of a spiral strongly suggests the pattern of DNA. Thus, we have an ancient symbol that indicates natural order and unity tied to the messy, contemporary essence in the assemblage of shredded paper imagery. An image of order coexisting on the same plane with its negative - its dizzying counterpart.

With her trio of bronze sculptures, *Concentrarsi (Invertito) 1-3* (2022), Linda Lerseth takes children's foam alphabet puzzle mats as her starting point toward exploring how we create and disrupt meaning. We might use these puzzle mats to teach children about spatial relations,

shapes, and colors in our everyday lives, but Lerseth's sculptures flip this notion. Inspired by the idea of a puzzle, of a structure composed of different elements that are incomplete on their own and thus mutually dependent, Lerseth assembles systems that defy firm placement. When pieced together, the items of her puzzle boxes provide precious little understanding as when served piecemeal. They may even raise some additional questions – making ideas about curiosity, play, confusion, and limits of knowledge essential to these works.

The three works are a continuation of Lerseth's investigation within contradiction - a surface-inverted version of the earlier works in the series, also entitled *Concentrarsi*. One of these earlier works, *Concentrarsi (J)* (2022), is featured in the show. In contrast to the new works, this piece carries its polished secret on the inside portion, with the outer surface given treatment noted by a heavy, uneven texture, as if to suggest a century spent underwater or in a damp basement. And yet, the inside painted in white car paint reveals its unmistakably contemporary origin.

Lerseth's sculptures signify the times at hand; they point to uniquely connected communities of the globalized society. A complex process occurs, partially affecting the artist's process before the work has even begun to take shape. The inspiration starts with the children's puzzle mats, made in China, ordered on Amazon, and delivered to Norway. Despite the connectedness and efficiency, confusion and overwhelm sometimes arise from these manufactured networks. Tumultuous, mixed up, and in flux - the sculptures are an amalgam of these often contradictory and confusing references. There is revelry to be found in this, from which Lerseth does not shy away. She embraces the contradictions and molds her sculptures along with them, not against them.

Cultural artifacts contain revealing information about our societies. These manufactured items indicate how humans who made them choose to exist in the world – what is vital to us, what might bring us joy, and what our habits, fears, or preoccupations may be. Jan Freuchen highlights this fascination in his embroidery works. They are created by assembling pieces of embroidery from different parts of Norway, made by various artisans. The artist fashions these works into collages on canvas. Through this unofficial collaboration, Freuchen circles in on motifs prominent in Norwegian culture, rendering familiar scenes into a patchwork resembling a storyboard or a roll of analog film tape. In *Hyttefelt* (2022), the artist plays an ode to the iconography of the contemporary Norwegian lifestyle with an assemblage of embroideries of simple wooden weekend houses surrounded by nature, painted in a traditional red hue. In it, he tells a shared story of an unassuming tradition, a procession of evocative scenes told in subtle detail, revealing a narrative shared by many people in this society. Similarly, in *Solstriper* (2022), Freuchen plays with the significance of a simple sunset, the perception and meaning of which among people is significantly shaped by the diverse geographical differences of Norway, as well as the time of the year, especially in parts of the country characterized by polar nights and the midnight sun.

Throughout history, various cultures have left behind different artifacts we have studied, and they inform our knowledge of these cultures. The number of these remnants is rarely substantial in number. Inadvertently, this leaves gaps in our understanding of the culture that created them, and we resort to filling them in different modes. The cultural relics of today's age are often mass-produced and seen as expendable, but if they were among the few items unearthed by society in the distant future, what may they reveal about us?



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