

LONE HAUGAARD MADSEN

Raum #415 - Knob 2024

Opening: May 25, 2024, 2 – 6 pm

Exhibition: May 25 – August 24, 2024

Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne

PRESS RELEASE

An exhibition by Lone Haugaard Madsen is like an expressive gathering of colour, language, and form, both familiar and mysterious. With her assemblage of paintings and sculptures, she shapes an unexpected visual conversation, like a déjà-vu never witnessed before – or a “jamais-vu”, in her own words. Canvases with translucent overlays of magenta red, rusty orange, crimson, and mud grey appear weightless and uncannily beautiful. Objects, like unexpected guests, interact with these paintings consolidating their presence in the room. These provocative and seductive sculptures made from discarded workshop components move in and out of the paintings, conferring them with figurative agency. Once you’ve looked through the unique lens of Madsen’s paintings, nothing seems quite like before. Her exceptional ability to generate a lingering repertoire of sentient images confirms her position as the most significant Danish painter and artist of her generation.

Conceptual and site-specific, Madsen’s earlier exhibitions were explorations of post-minimalist art and institutional critique. She transported her studio into the gallery, making use of incongruous leftovers like wooden slats, crumpled canvas or bamboo poles that appeared like stage props without a play. She conscribed structural roles to the walls, doors, windows, and floors. Black canvases were determined by the amount of pigment squeezed out of a tube of oil paint. They leant against concrete casts taken of her studio wall, or sat unexpectedly across a window, partially blocking the view. Wire sculptures hung down from the ceiling like skeletal armatures of a building under construction, or its opposite, a ruin.

For this exhibition at Nagel Draxler, Madsen has retrieved core elements from her past work, such as the infamous Doorstopper first shown at Secession in Vienna in 2006, a wooden wedge that functioned to let air in, and institutional pressure out. A new sculpture made from twisted yarn partially caged by vertical mesh stands in a weathered concrete block near a steel pole that spouts deflated red balloons and multicoloured steamers. Geometric mouldings discarded from bronze-casting are painted a virulent green, shot through with chrome yellow. Positioned next to the canvases, these metallic forms combine painting and sculpture and in their alchemical metamorphosis, appear as light as a leaf. In the foundries and workshops Madsen searches for the understatements of production that fuel her ascetic methodology.

After twenty-one years living in Vienna, where she studied and taught at the Academy of Fine Art, she has moved her studio and her life to an island off Denmark. She speaks of sliding into this new environment, a life so different from the Viennese urban metabolism. She has begun to document her paintings by photographing them outdoors against the backdrop of green grass and ploughed fields. In her paintings, she appears to zoom into the fuzzy borders of a myopic gaze, capturing the

unknown optic deep within the flourishing biotope that surrounds her. On a cream white canvas, she takes a cloth to brush colour, stroking the pigment over and over until it appears to flutter on the surface. Her new paintings, as if oxygenated by this new environment, chase the puzzles of beauty in today's fraught and damaged world. (Text by Dr. Clémentine Deliss)