

The Title

of this show derives from my interest in food as a cultural identity marker. Potato, in Danish “kartoffel”, is immigrant slang for native Danes. Food is often the last stronghold of immigrant heritage. First, they give up traditional clothing, then their language, and finally, their food slowly changes, blending into the adopted culture over time. Now, Berliner Döner is a common sight in Copenhagen. Asger Jorn once wrote, “A painting’s favourite food is painting.” Like many of his peers, Jorn painted over flea market finds, showing that all art builds on the past, drawing on motifs, ideas, and stylistic elements from elsewhere. He wanted to shift the focus away from the individual and onto a cultural process. He often signed his modifications alongside the original author’s signature, creating a dialogue between artists across time.

The Paintings

in this show bear my signature, but it is my assistant Nina who painted and signed them. Her eye for colour surpasses mine. Unlike Jorn’s flea market finds, these paintings were gifted to me by a friend. I asked Nina to paint over them, inspired by the original motifs, using only one or two colours while preserving the edges. The edges of a painting are where its history reads. Painters often look at paintings from the side, their cheeks almost brushing the wall. Beneath the new paint, the old motifs whisper through like a palimpsest.

The Crosses

arranged on the ground are Christmas tree stands from my collection. The collection grows every January. A cross usually hangs on a wall (like a painting), but these belong on the floor. Their subtle variations and layered meanings fascinate me. Bringing evergreen branches inside during solstice is an old pagan tradition, now repurposed by Christianity and capitalism. Like the paintings, these objects bear traces of the past while becoming something new – potato, potato.

Magnus Frederik Clausen