

Sharp Projects  
Small Sculptures  
Exhibition text by Malou Solbjerg

Opening: November 26th from 4 - 8pm  
November 26 - December 17, 2021  
Open by appointment

The November exhibition at Sharp Projects features 38 small sculptures received through an open call. The guidelines of the call were simple: all sculptures within the dimensions of 20 x 15 x 30 cm were reviewed, the best ones selected and carefully curated to go on display.

The Small Sculptures concept came from the gallerist's belief that everyone should be able to own a piece of art. Many of the works are situated on individual shelves presented almost as luxury design items, while others are placed according to their fake functionality, giving these works an expression of being in their right element; a shoe on the floor, a banana on the staircase and a puddle of water leaking from the water pipes in the basement.

"The size confinements created some overlaps that reflect everyday objects (found in a home) like a tissue box, trophies, vases, bowls, cans, bottles, sinks, doorknobs, toys, etc.," the gallerist notices, while also leading my attention to the different thematics vibrating through the show. The environmental awareness is present in both Reevein's *Spora Collection* made out of recycled or wasted textiles, the sculpted gneiss by Freja Niemann Lundrup, the felt coral *New Reef* by Maja Lindberg Schwaner, the limestone *Oyster* by Sofie Amalie Andersen, the volcanic ash bowls by Carlos Álvarez + Saray Ossorio, and *Den sidste vinter's* (The last winter) ice melted into water, made of glass by Matilde Duus. Fluidity flows as a theme in itself in the works *Sinks* by Cecilie Skov; a leaf, cow hair, and piano wire caught in casted silicone squares, as well as in *O* by Trine Struwe; wading water (and milk) within a hand-woven tissue cloth in the shape of the letter O, spilling over the edges. The artist examines the negative space within the O, which to me looks more like a zero, bringing my mind to the computational aspect of this CNC-cut work, which is yet another recurring feature in the show. Zeros and ones are the new studio assistants in modern sculpture making. An exception to the rule is sculptor Ida Retz Wessberg whose jesmonite cast of bubble wrap is made from the artist's own hand, meanwhile also representing the negative space (just like Lisa Jäger's silicone bubbles containing air) unlike traditional sculpting in dense materials like stone or wood.

Another sculpture is by Rosalina Kruse Serup, who digitally molded a fragment of the landscape formations of Stevns Klint – the 17 kilometer stretch of the 40 meter high chalk cliffs located at Southeast coastline of Denmark. Stevns Klint is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, due to the traces from an asteroid that hit the Earth 66 million years ago, which can be found here. The asteroid put an end to more than half of all life on the planet, including the dinosaurs, reminding disturbingly of the current sixth mass extinction not caused by an extra-terrestrial celestial body but human species ourselves. The other 3D printed work is a *pile of bla bla*, made in red clay - by the performance artist who recently changed her name into Eau (the French word for water) Pernice. Modern technology merged with the ancient materiality and connotations that lies within water, chalk, clay and

language; stirred up with an @ sign, reminds me of the remoteness between climate action and climate talk, which we witnessed at COP26 to the soundtrack of Greta T. shouting: No more bla bla bla!

It seems to me there's a certain heaviness in many of the sculptures, outweighing the small scale somehow; several works are casted in bronze and if one were allowed to touch, they would quickly feel the density of the twig, the air max 90 and the banana, realizing a perceptible illusion, sort of a gravitational shift from what one's mind would predict and expect, to what one's hand is physically met by.

Another recurring topic one may see in the small sculptures show, is the subtle comments on commerce and consumerism; from the flower industry over Nike to Andy Warhol ("from a to b and back again", that is in this case read as *from black to yellow and back again* by Elisabeth Molin). The rotten banana one may slip in on the stairs, has since been cast in bronze obviously increased its value massively, perhaps pointing to the absurdity of object fetishism existing in the art world, similar to last year's stunt in Art Basel/Miami where a duct taped banana sold for \$120.000.

An object exhibited beyond its regular use bears the poetic title of a person searching for answers in flowers; '*effeuiller la marguerite*' corresponds to "s/he loves me, s/he loves me not" referencing the game of picking petals off daisies when in doubt. This time around, however, the flower has the shape of a pink tissue box, when seen from the side, and a vagina, when seen from above.

Anna Walther's *Gatekeepers* is a blown glass object stuck in-between a life-like door frame. Where glass usually signals fragility, the glass body of this work appears more voluminous. If the artist sees her *Gatekeepers* as a portal, the work is actually perfect for the concept of the open call. Who gets in and who's left out. It's a tough call and the art world as any other competitive business can be mean, but I do think that the gallerist can give herself credit for somehow being more inclusive when inviting this many artists into the space. When that is said and done, I do see the show as a brilliant networking and promotion strategy of the gallery as well as the artists. Mobilising such a huge group of excellent artists who perhaps would not hitherto be present in the Copenhagen art scene; and offering them a platform to connect with first time buyers who can relate to the idea of small sculptures rather than big, expensive paintings in fancy downtown galleries for VIPs only. Mrs. Sharp is new in town and she bridges her own worlds (from the US over Vienna and Venice, to her parallel worldwide career in fashion) with what Denmark has to offer.

It takes a lot of effort to organize this many artists and artworks, so one may wonder why such a short exhibition period, but I guess this may not be the last time we see some of the positions presented with Miss Sharp. I personally imagine this set-up as a sort of flirtatious speed date between gallerist, artists, and collectors, to be followed by more serious engagements later on, if the right chemistry is there. In Denmark we used to see an increasing number of one-night stands this time of the year, due to the horrible yet strongly embedded in the Danish culture phenomena of "julefrokost". Since Covid I doubt this sleeping around still takes place, but one thing is for sure: Ilethia Sharp never kisses and tells – and for this simple reason she has not established herself as a traditional gallerist representing artists as such. Rather she has developed a program based on open relationships

with those she admires, casually collaborating without any strings attached; a model that seems appropriate for an experimental space that does not wish to commit to commercial standards of the art world but aims to simply make aesthetically, interesting, and state-of-the-art exhibitions. Within the first year of existence, Ilethia Sharp also hosted Antillanité – an interdisciplinary collaboration reflecting processes of anti-colonial knowledge production. I look forward to experiencing more of these political and interdisciplinary research exhibitions combining design and fashion with art and education, in the new year at Sharp Projects.

Carlos Álvarez + Saray Ossorio, Sofie Amalie Andersen, Tine Bek, Léon Bloch, Mikkel Carl, Matilde Duus, Jacob Egeberg, Ditte Marie Frost, Lisa Jäger, Martin Lang, Clara Lena Langenbach, Juliana Lindenhofer, Freja Niemann Lundrup, Mattia Maso, Elisabeth Molin, Eau Pernice, Marie Raffn, BASIS RHO by Jeschkelanger, Maja Lindberg Schwaner, Rosalina Kruse Serup, Laura Sigrüner, Cecilie Skov, Trine Struwe, Reevein Studios, Anna Walther, Ida Retz Wessberg

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