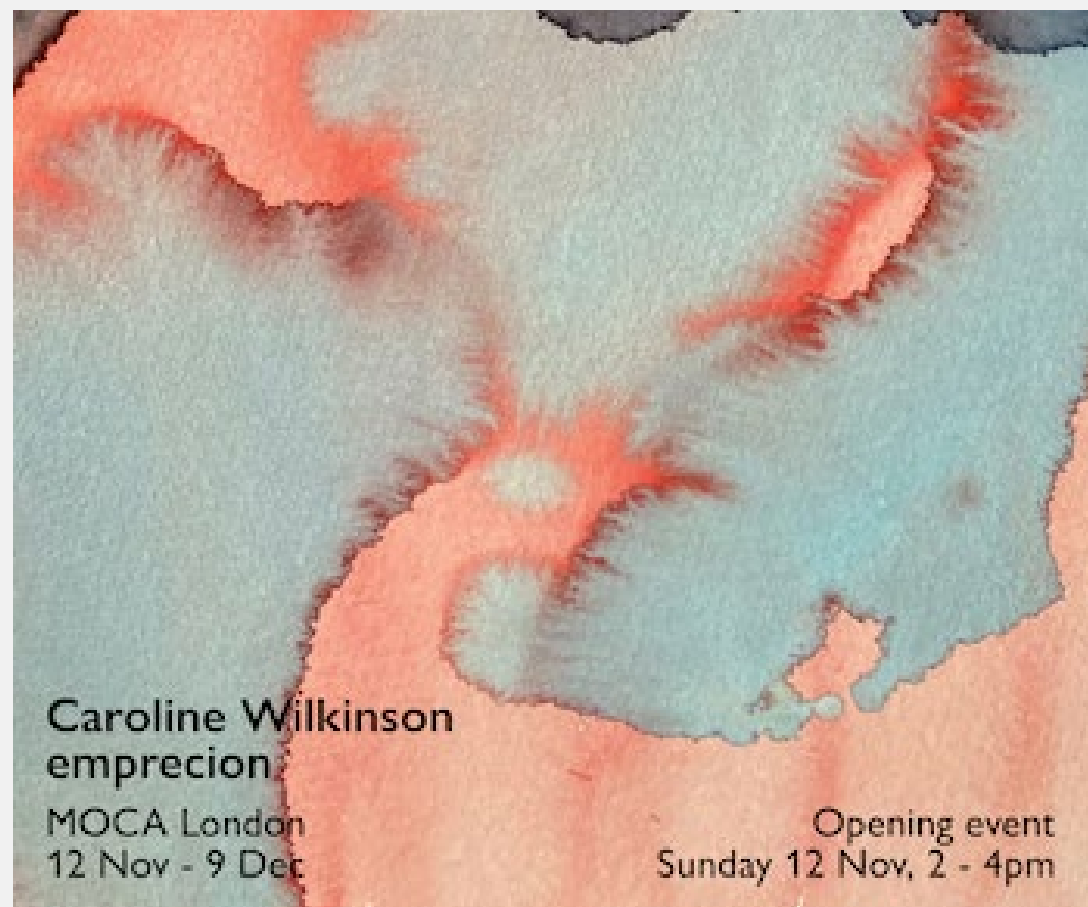


ART IN BLOOM

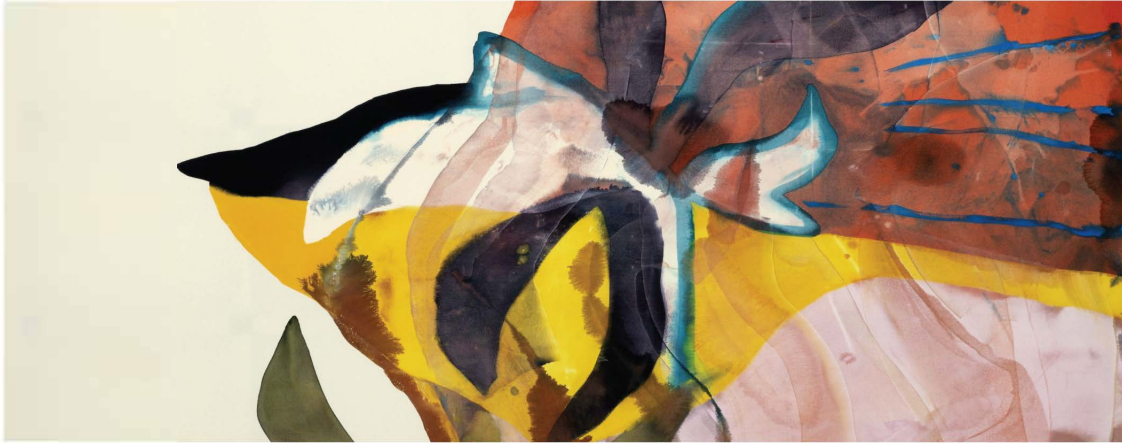
By Paul Carey-Kent • 3 August 2022

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Ragna Bley: Enter, Erase, 2022 at Pilar Corias

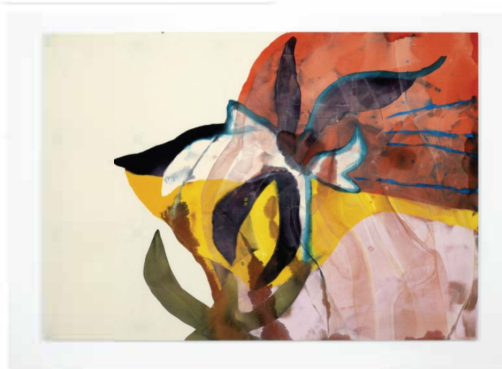
Norwegian artist Ragna Bley's paintings stem from a poem she writes beforehand, in this case 'Viridian Land'. The results look somewhat like fluidly-stained abstractions, but floral forms often seem to emerge. Perhaps 'Enter, Erase' relates to the poem's injunction 'walk us through that tunnel of green / Imagining another place'.



Advisory Highlights at Frieze New York

By Rory Mitchell | New York, 30 April 2021

Presented at The Shed in Manhattan for the first time, the tenth edition of Frieze New York is running between 5 and 9 May 2021 with over 60 galleries from across the world. Ocula Advisory's Rory Mitchell selects ten highlights from the fair.



Ragna Bley, *Undress, Salty* (2021). Acrylic on sailcloth. 150 x 212 cm. Courtesy Downs & Ross.

Ragna Bley at Downs & Ross

This exquisite acrylic painting by Ragna Bley is rendered on sailcloth, its billowing forms mimicking the material when set in motion by the wind.

Leaving the sailcloth unprimed, Bley's colours seep across the surface and gently merge with one another. Employing a lightness of touch, these are sensorial pictures, caught between abstraction and figuration.

The Uppsala-born artist is based in Oslo, where she returned after earning an MA from the Royal College of Art in 2015.

Art **Reviews**

Ragna Bley's Cerebral, Swirling Abstractions

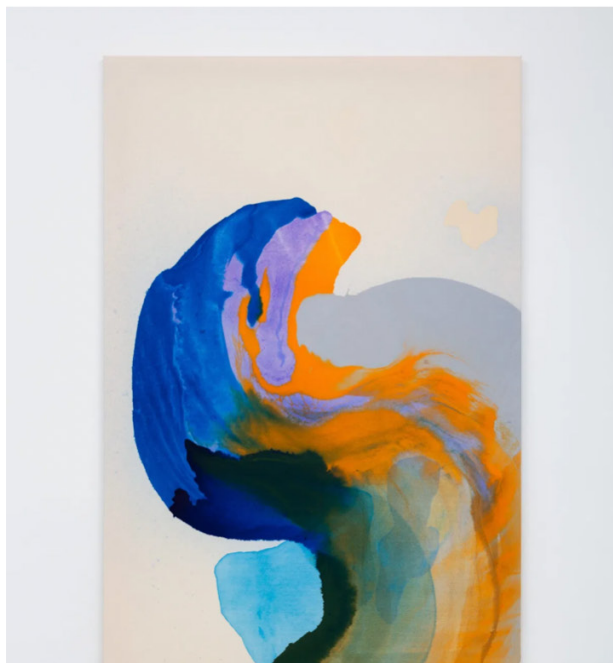
Equally intuitive and intellectual, Bley's paintings redirect a time-honored form of abstraction into a more communal, cosmic unknowing.

by Billy Anania February 24, 2021

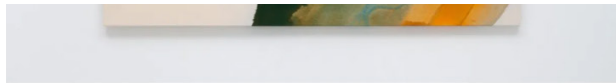


Ragna Bley, "Undertown (Heat)" (2020). Acrylic on sailcloth, 59 x 37 1/2 inches (all images courtesy the artist and Downs & Ross New York; photo by Daniel Terna)

In nautical terminology, to “sound” is to measure the deep sea. Sounding, which dates back to the 19th century, was the first method of reaching beyond what the sun allowed us to see, in order to study the ocean floor. Today, echo sounding allows researchers to visualize vast bodies of water with corresponding colors — warm shades of red, orange, and yellow for shallows, and dark greens, blues, and purples to connote the depths.



Ragna Bley, a Swedish painter based in Norway, works entirely on her studio floor, pouring gallons of thinned paint onto primed sailcloth. Much like the late [Helen Frankenthaler](#), who treated the seas of Cape Cod as her muses, Bley uses vibrant hues of the natural world to measure emotional depths. Her latest [exhibition](#) at Downs & Ross, appropriately titled *Soundings*, finds Bley affixing these studies to the Lower East Side gallery's walls.



Ragna Bley, "Čir-čir, Audra" (2020). Acrylic on sailcloth, 59 x 37 1/2 inches (photo by Daniel Terna)

In "Čir-čir, Audra" (2020), a wave rises from a dark green base to a royal-blue crest, a throughline of orange paint defining its arc. The artist's subtle

gestures intersect with sprawling stains, imitating the sea's fluid motion. Between the gallery's two rooms, the blood-red "Circadian" (2020) is displayed on a

Stylistically, these paintings are all very consistent, but each work plays different tricks on the eye. Thin pastels foreground a glorious curved rainbow in "Pile" (2020), which appears to sparkle due to the folds of paint left by Bley's scraper. "Whole Current" (2020), a deep cavern in purple and red exerts a sense of dominance, menacing like molten rock. Its darkness seems to have a logic, though, with very thin linework bringing out dimensions in the layers.

In the exhibition's press release, Norwegian art critic Maria Horvei emphasizes Bley's "considerations on the deepest foundations of all living things, as well as on phenomena on the very outskirts of human reach." Science and science fiction both inform her practice. Equally intuitive and cerebral, Bley's paintings redirect a time-honored form of abstraction away from an auteur mentality and into a more communal, cosmic unknowing.



Ragna Bley, "Witnesses" (2020), acrylic on sailcloth, 59 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist and Downs & Ross New York (photo by Daniel Terna)

THEGUIDE.ART



● Ragna Bley

Images courtesy of the artist and Downs & Ross, New York.

Photography Istvan Virag

By Rachel Small

For a predator that dwells in darkness near the ocean floor, the deep sea anglerfish certainly looks the part. In lieu of eyesight, it dangles a gently glowing orb from a stalk on its forehead to bring prey within striking distance of jagged, sword-like teeth that jut out from a gaping mouth. These notorious physical characteristics only belong to the female half of the species, however; males are many times smaller than their female counterparts, more closely resembling tadpoles. Mating involves him latching onto her abdomen, where he remains permanently, his internal organs eventually subsumed into hers.

It's this sort of uncanny union—one found in nature yet profoundly unnatural to the unacquainted human observer—that artist Ragna Bley seeks to emulate in her amorphous, abstract compositions. "These transgressions of categories, or what they're supposed to be next to something else, that's interesting for me," Bley says. "It's also the displacement of things, maybe one shape does not fit into another, but still, there's something there." She adds, "I'll look for instances of these in literature, visuals, or in daily life, all over the place.

Last year, with memories of swimming in the Baltic Sea as a child at the back of her mind, Bley took to reading about the ocean. Knowledge gleaned from scientific texts gradually started to intermingle with fantastical imagery drawn from science fiction by Octavia Butler and Kurt Vonnegut. Soon, a new series was underway—one that, for the first time in her practice, she would paint it on sailcloth. Her efforts ultimately culminated in the ten paintings on display in "Soundings," her first solo exhibition at Downs & Ross.

Bley's approach to abstraction is hardly mired formalist dogma. "I've always been interested in a space that is quite ambiguous, maybe in between representation and abstraction," she says. "Or, the place where you recognize [something] but not quite, or that slips away." Not infrequently, Bley will choose to acknowledge the figurative referent outright in a work's title: a cloud of jumbled, yellow lines that touch a translucent, fan-like structure? It's from a 2017 painting dubbed *Bee Clue*.

Whatever marine lifeforms that seem to emerge across "Soundings," are not literal interpretations of any one referent. "The aesthetic or images that you can see from the deep sea are there," Bley says. "But, they have not been a primary source of inspiration. That is, I haven't thought about replicating them in a direct way." Bley tailored her process accordingly, downplaying sharp, gestural strokes in preparatory studies in favor of bulbous shapes and undulating contours. These versatile architectures, like proteins swirling in a primordial soup, became the basis for her forms.

Then, with sheets of sailcloth stretched into frames and placed on her studio floor, she began spreading and mixing acrylic paints, often heavily watered down, across its surface. Once a canvas became covered in pigment to her liking, Bley proceeded to cut it into either two or four parts. Out of the resulting pieces, she chose the ones she considered most successful to become the paintings in "Soundings."

Evidence of this process can be observed in *Hurled Life* (2020) [pictured], in which colors at the top and bottom of the frame appear to seep beyond its visible edges, the motion of water captured in dried paint. The effect is also discernible in *Witnesses* (2020) [pictured]. Here, two separate forms looked to have swept paint inwards from opposite directions off the sides of the canvas, and toward its middle where they meet. Either half is distinct, crystalized in different hues and patterns; melded together, where one ends and the other begins is indistinguishable.

I asked Bley if "Soundings" is in any way a response to or reflection on climate change. "I think all works are engaged in our political reality," she responds. "Obviously, it's something I'm acutely aware of, especially with [the ocean] being such a big part of our world that we know very little about.

"Soundings" is on view at Downs & Ross, 96 Bowery, 2nd Floor, through March 6, 2021.

FLASH ART

•REVIEWS

7 April 2020, 1:00 pm CET

Ragna Bley & Inger Ekdahl *Malmö Konsthall* by [William Kherbek](#)



① 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Ragna Bley. Exhibition view at Malmö Konsthall, 2020. Photography by Helene Toresdotter. Courtesy of the artist and Malmö Konsthall.

Abstract painting has a long history in Sweden. Indeed, modern abstraction may have been first manifested in the painting of the spiritually inclined Hilma af Klint, whose vibrant divergences from traditional forms of representation precede Kandinsky's shift away from representation by four years. Two inheritors of af Klint's approach are exhibited together at Malmö Konsthall: the modernist innovator Inger Ekdahl and her younger interlocutor, Ragna Bley. The exhibition offers an engrossing artistic dialogue as Ekdahl and Bley approach abstraction with sharply divergent voices.

Bley's large paintings appear in procession in the Konsthall's main space. Under the series title "Truckers," large-scale enamel-and-digital-print-on-PVC works are stationed one after another across the spacious main hall, with two prints in each step of the sequence positioned back to back. Bley's works have an appealing looseness, by turns biomorphic and hallucinatory. With their one-word titles — e.g. *Lie*, *Palm*, *Fast*, *Be*, *Ask* — I found myself drawing parallels with the otherworldly emotional states evoked by the music of 1990s shoegaze icons My Bloody Valentine. Bley clearly has a taste for the unsettled; also included in the exhibition are five mixed-media canvases displayed in the Konsthall's courtyard, which were taking a battering in the gales of wind and rain soaking Malmö on the day of my visit.

Bley's abstraction is perhaps earthier than Ekdahl's. Displayed in an enclosed corridor of their own, Ekdahl's works, spanning nearly three decades of activity, evince an endless fascination with the dynamics of color and spatiality. Ekdahl's variation of abstraction could be said to have a spiritual dimension, but it is an almost platonic spirituality, a discourse of forms that often — but not always — harmonize. The canvases and works on paper in Ekdahl's section of the exhibition are considerably smaller in scale than Bley's works, but they gesture toward the infinite. To move between the sections of the exhibition is to consider the lineage to which these images belong, moving from the hermetic spaces in which, one may recall, af Klint kept her work hidden, to Ekdahl's brilliant non-spaces, to Bley's rain-drenched canvases; abstraction, too, can be seen to have undertaken a journey, from the mind to the world and back — and back again.

fields of colour

THE ORGANIC ABSTRACTION OF RAGNA BLEY

Text by Emily Chancey Images courtesy of the artist and OSL Contemporary

Swedish artist Ragna Bley's work is charged with colour. Recalling the stain paintings of Helen Frankenthaler, fields of colour seep into one another, pigments diffuse like watercolour, layers of paint simultaneously pool, ooze and spread throughout her paintings. "A lot of my work starts with an idea of three colours and a stroke," Bley says.

She mixes her paints herself in a process much longer than actually painting, and it is key to her work. As she describes her process of working with colour, trying things out and sketching, it's clear there's very little room for error when putting paint to canvas. Bley instead works with her mistakes. "That's part of the process," she says, "trying to forget the first idea and working around or over it in a second or third attack. It might take some time." In 2018, OSL Contemporary in Oslo presented its first exhibition by Ragna Bley entitled Pluto whose cornerstone was revision. The artist spent two years working and reworking the surface of a new series of paintings.

More nuanced than abstract paintings suggestive of bodies and figures, Bley's paintings oscillate between organic and inorganic forms. They evoke amoebic shapes and microorganisms, crystal and mineral agate, decomposed materials, viscous oil spills and vibrant sea life. "I'm interested in making works that are quite ambivalent in terms of figuration," she says. "I like that they have these organic shapes that might look like something, that they're associative and a lot of people will see what they are." Bley is interested in the state of the artwork, what qualities escape the viewer and then call out to them, what associations are made, how recognition and the experience of a piece may change from looking at it. Her paintings seem caught in a state of evolution, as if suspended in the process of creation and left open to the viewer's imagination.

Bley's work is anchored by the idea of landscape, the forest having been present in her paintings. Nature and science, too, have been essential to her practice not only via organic forms but also in the process. Her 2017 exhibition 'Zoid' suggests a conceptual understanding of science and biology. Bronze figures lie together like ocean-floor organisms. Nine abstract paintings reflect watery fields and glowing underwater forms. In 2018, she developed works in relation to material properties and scientific processes. She intentionally exposed them to external elements like rain, sun and pollution.

Ragna graduated from Oslo National Academy of Art with a BFA in 2011 and then with an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London in 2015. She has gone on to show internationally at such galleries and institutions as Kunsthall Oslo, Frankfurt am Main in Berlin and Hester in New York. Though best known for her paintings, ranging from large-scale installation to more intimate pieces, Bley also works across sculpture and performance. A distinctly experimental artist, she ultimately investigates form and material properties, text and language.

Her material interests are vast, ranging from acrylic paint on raw linen or Dacron to enamel paint on PVC and to edible, organic materials like food. Past sculptures featured egg yolks on limestone, for example. "I've been doing some works with jellies, cakes, edible work that lasts a short time," she explains. In 2019, Bley ventured into the world of food, investigating the experience of eating for her program at Corridor Project Space. She created jelly landscapes across tables and the exhibition space, accompanied by low frequency sonic interventions inspired by Nabokov. Her temporary installation recalled historical entertainment in European royal courts, 70s nostalgia, Instagram slime, and aquarium habitats, all encouraging viewers to question their eating and buying behaviors and to reconsider the products they consume.

In one of three new series of works prepared for her current solo show at Malmö Konsthall, Bley created five large-scale canvases with pigments and organic food items. Characteristic of her largely free and uncontrollable process, she gave material "autonomy" to the works. The series mounted outdoors in the gallery's courtyard reflects the artist's method of creating work at once unpredictable and deliberate.

Bley made two other series for her first major presentation in Sweden at the Malmö Konsthall. 'Truckers' and 'Ferns' are each made up of seven paintings. They're arranged back to back in a procession through the centre of the exhibition space, each direction offering viewers the opportunity to experience and interpret the works in a new way. These works are the focal point of the exhibition and the cornerstone from which Bley drew further inspiration for the exhibition.

Drawn to large formats as they pull us into the paintings; it's as though the viewer is inside the work and the world around it disappears. On one side of the train of paintings,

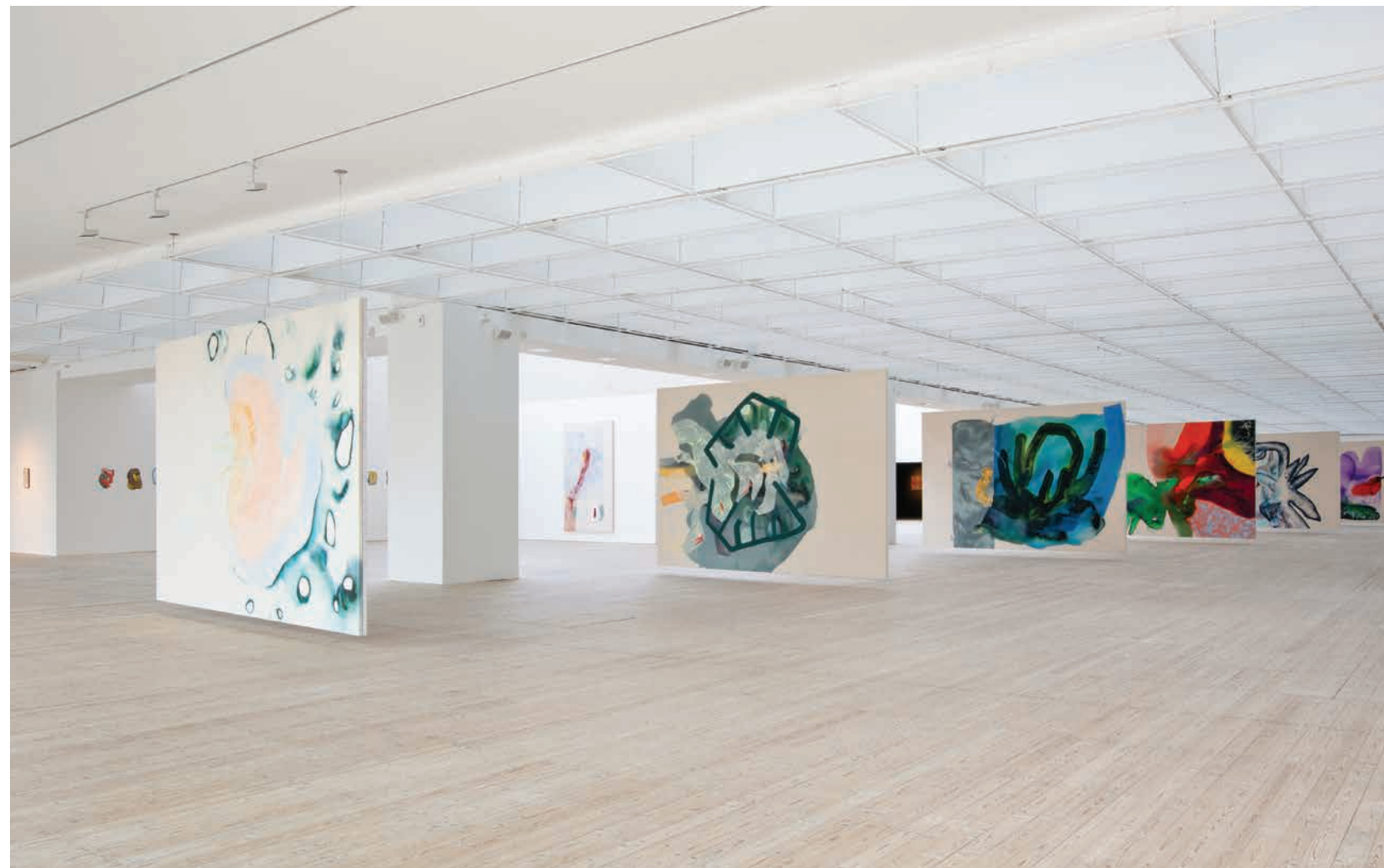
viewers may recognize Bley's familiar aesthetic in her series "Ferns." Though painted with precision and intention, paint appears to flow freely and carve its own path. A mix of bold and diluted colors form ambiguous shapes at times fluid and others jagged. Much like recognizing the shapes of clouds, viewers might be reminded of natural landscapes, plants and organisms. Turning around onto the other side of the paintings, Bley incorporates language. Faded words repeat across the background of the canvases like whispers, often accompanied by faint patterns reminiscent of the words themselves. Bley boldly paints a mix of sharp and flowing shapes recalling crystal geodes upon the paintings. "They're supposed to remind you of the inside of a handbag, the backside of analogue photography works that are quite faded," Bley describes, "The paint is then like an attack on top of that."

Language is key not only to Bley's work in this exhibition but also to her creative practice as a whole. Abstract titles are a means of bringing humour and irony to the works while also opening them up and bringing them into a wider context. Bley often writes narrative to accompany her series and shows, presented in releases and catalogues. Readings and spoken word performances complement her exhibitions. "I find spoken word can reflect an almost fleeting or abstract feel in a way that's different from the written word," she explains, "because it's also about how something's said."

While Bley tends to let go of language quite a lot while developing works and return to it at the end, language provided the foundation for Truckers. The words painted, also the titles of the works, are quite simple: Lie, Palm, Fast, Be, Ask, □ and arm. "I was limited and interested by the idea that they would exist in both English and Swedish," she says. Though written in Swedish, Bley is aware foreign viewers may read and understand them in Swedish first. "Be" means "pray" in Swedish; "ask" is "ash"; "fly" being "escape." Like Bley's two series presented back to back, offering a change in perspective, the language of the paintings brings them into a new context. A state of in-betweenness defines Ragna Bley's work. It is an experiment of language and text, form and material; a juxtaposition of abstraction and representation and a contrast of intention with impulse and change.

Ragna Bley continues at Malmö Konsthall through 13 April 2020 Ragnabley.com

"Drawn to large formats as they pull us into the paintings; it's as though the viewer is inside the work and the world around it disappears."



PREVIOUS *Furrow Bleach*, 2019 Blekna, fåra, Acrylic on canvas / Akrylfärg på duk 255cm x 390cm
OPPOSITE courtesy of the artist and MALMÖ KONSTHALL photographer HELENE TORESDOTTER
THIS PAGE Photographer EINAR ASLAKSEN

Critic's Guide: Berlin

A guide to the best shows across the German capital

BY GABRIELA ACHA



Ragna Bley, 'Lay Open', 2017.
Courtesy: Frankfurt am Main, Berlin

Ragna Bley, 'Lay Open'

[Frankfurt am Main](#)

25 June – 23 July 2017

Ragna Bley's paintings look organic, decayed and abject, yet their titles suggest something far more psychological is at play: see *Conflicting Evidence* (2015) or *It took a week to remember what I already know* (2015). An amalgam of personal experiences, anecdotal events and decomposed materials serve as levers for the Swedish-born, former Royal College of Art student who, in anticipation of her Frankfurt am Main's solo show 'Lay Open' (2017), has given some clues as to her thought process. The press release describes an 'unnaturally green' grass; a corrupted perception of nature framing a situation in which a person – anonymous to us, yet very close to Bley – introduces a new bag used to accelerate a dead body's decomposition. The obvious existential drama of the situation breaks down through an image of the comic, ghost-like creature Hattifattener and is followed by laughs, revealing how entangled and blurred nature and artifice, as well as superficiality and depth are in one's existence.



FRI KOLONI

Ragna Bley

«Zooid»

Kunsthall Oslo /

Munchmuseet i bevegelse

11.03.–21.05.

Ragna Bley (f. 1986) er kjent for sine abstrakte malerier, ofte med i flytende formspråk og med varierende grad tematisk knytning opp mot natur; klima, vær og vind. Denne gangen virker livet under vann å være den viktigste inspirasjonskilden til utstillingen i Kunsthall Oslo og Munchmuseet i bevegelses midlertidige lokaler i Bjørvika. Tittelvalget reflekterer dette: *zooid* er en betegnelse fra biologien for flercellede organismer som er kolonidannende. Et dypdykk i Wikipedia kan fortelle at korallrev, flatmark og maneter er eksempler på slike dyr og at disse kan omfatte et variabelt antall zooider.

Maleriene til Bley er nonfigurative, malt direkte på seilduk, og fremstiller ikke zooidene direkte, men levner likevel løse assosiasjoner til sjøen. Bølgende, store strøk overlapper felt med tynn, gjennomsiktig akryl, hovedsakelig i brokete sjatteringer av blått, grønt, rosa og grått. Teksturer og overflatebruk varierer fra arbeid til arbeid – i *Receive in Past Tense* (2017) er for eksempel den øvre delen av bildet dekket av en tett oppbygging av sirkulære former i grønngrå sjatteringer, mens det i *River Custom Tepid* (2017) finnes en knapt synlig rektangulær form som nærmest svever over en fargetett, bevegelsesrik formasjon.

Zooidene er derimot gjenstand for langt mer direkte fremstilling gjennom tilstedeværelsen av Bleys 44 små bronseskulpturer som brer seg utover gallerigulvet. Her finnes krabbeliggende

organismer, tang og korall – akvatiske livsformer organisert i en slyngende strøm. Den diminutive størrelsen på et par centimeter skaper en virkningsfull kontrast til de om lag tre meter høye maleriene og betrakterens egen kropp.

Dialogen mellom figurasjonen i skulpturene og den lyriske abstraksjonen i maleriene fremstår som en nøye overveiet strategi. Det polyfoniske, kollektive livet til zooidene blir ikke omsatt til menneskelige erfaringer, men blir i maleriene i stedet opphavet til et estetisk



paradigme med tydelige formale trekk i bevegelse, farge, og den akvarell-lignende maleteknikken. Det er et bildeunivers som gir gjenkjennbare assosiasjoner, men som også virker å henvise til mulighetene for andre erfaringer av havbunnen enn de som er tilgjengelige for mennesket.

De eventuelle politiske implikasjonene av zooidenes livsførsel blir i midlertid overlatt til betrakteren. Har mennesket noe å lære fra kolonidannende dyr? Eller kunne det blitt reist spørsmål vedrørende menneskeskapte endringer i livsgrunnlaget for slike organismer?

Den sistnevnte problemstilling er muligens overflødig, ettersom miljøspørsmål allerede er allestedsnærværende i det offentlige ordskiftet. Likevel, fraværet av politisk ytring differensierer arbeidene til Bley fra kunstnere som Tue Greenfort, som i fjorårets utstilling «Norsk natur» ved Museet for samtidskunst (Nasjonalmuseet) tydelig knyttet skulpturer av invaderende manet opp mot menneskets innvirkning på diverse økosystemer.

Dialogen med zooidene som idémateriale og estetisk paradigme bidrar likevel til å gi arbeidene et nedslagsfelt som rommer mer enn ren form og teknikk. Havslivet oppleves som et fremmed, nærmest oversanselig inntrykk. Det er et idémateriale som åpenbart er samtidsrelevant, men som kunne hatt godt av å noe utbrodering.

Nicholas Norton

↗ Installasjonsbilde fra «Zooid». Bronseskulpturer, variable dimensjoner / *River custom tepid* (2017). Akryl på Dacron, 170 x 330 cm.

← *Plastic sluice* (2017). Akryl på Dacron, 170 x 330 cm.

Foto: Kunsthall Oslo. Gjengitt med tillatelse fra kunstneren

BILLEDKUNST
2017 · Nr 2

KRITIKK

Hvilke unge malere ville kunstsamlere Rolf Stenersen satset på om

han levde i dag? Kunsthall Oslo holder en knapp på Ragna Bley.

Må samarbeide egne impulser

Ragna Bley kjenner sine begrensninger. Derfor lar hun naturen og kjemien være med på å avgjøre hvordan maleriene hennes skal se ut.

KUNST

Av Søren Ragna Hammer (tekst) og Søren Ragna Hammer (foto)

Når jeg drar fra studioet om kvelden, vet jeg aldri hvordan lærerene mine vil se ut når jeg kommer tilbake neste morgen, forteller kunstmaler Ragna Bley.

Det kan hende ut som inngangen til en dramatisk nat som delfig vakkert ved et stellerarbeidsskap, men mangelen på kunstnerisk skykket i realiteten, maleribruket til den svensk-amerikanske kunstneren.

Ved å male med utvannet akrylfarvning på signert seidisk, maler nemlig Bley delvis kontrollert over hvordan malingen reagerer med farge og den fuktige.

Det legger en begrensning i hva man kan tenke ut på farge. Det er et ganske komplekst samarbeid mellom tanker, hånd og materiale, og det kan være veldig å slippe noe av kontrollen. Det er for eksempel utrolig vanskelig å skulle legge prikker på et ark med innbrenning om å få det til å se tilfeldig ut og ut det faktisk gjør det. Man styver alltid mot et maleri. Med denne metoden oppstår det resultater jeg ikke kunne tenkt meg på forhånd, forteller Bley om Klassekampen maler henne på Kunst-

Fakta:
Ragna Bley: 38 år gammel, født i Uppsala i Sverige (1978), bor og jobber i Oslo.
Arbeider primært med maleri, men har også vært innen fotografi, video, performance og tekst.
Utdannet ved Kunstakademiet i Oslo og Royal College of Art i London.
Har hatt separatutstillinger på steder i New York og London (MAM i Oslo). Skal snart ansette på en separatutstilling på Frankfort am Main i Berlin og delta på Norsk Skulpturbiennale 2017.
Er for tiden aktuell med utstillingen «Zoo» på Kunsthall Oslo, utstillingen åpner i dag og står til 21. mai.

hall Oslo. I utstillingen legger hun sin separatutstilling «Zoo».

Lot regnemann avgjøre
For noen malere er maleriet Ragna Bley for alvor kontrollert over egne verker.

I gruppeutstillingen «Kommis» på Unga Kunstneres Samfund planer hun sine malerier utendørs under gatetaket til det lille vassingsrommet ved St. Olavs plass i Oslo.

Gjennom vindene i kjellerstajen kunne publikum høre hvordan regnemann frakket malingen, som Bley hadde sydd inn i små bunnere i brekket, utover flatene. Været ble installerte i midten av september så med andre ord helt usærlig ut om de hun tok med i midten av oktober.

For meg er ikke skillet mellom det menneskelige og det naturlige så relevant. Som mennesker burde vi begynne å tenke på oss selv på en annen måte og slutte å henge på naturen som en beskyttelse til vår verden, sier Bley.

I en artikkel på nettstedet Kunstarkiv trakk daværende direktør for Kunstmuseet Hildebrandt Bley inn i «Rommene» som et av høydepunktene fra klassiskamp 2016, og han pekte på hvordan kunstneren hadde gjort et godt valg i å samarbeide med Stenersen i utstillingen.

Et av konseptene er utstillingen med yngre malere som Rolf Stenersen ville inkludert i sin samling om han levde i dag.

Rolf Stenersen var en inspirasjon for Bley. Han satset på mange unge, ofte kjente kunstnere, forteller kunstmaler Elisabeth Byre ved Kunsthall Oslo.

Vi mener at Ragna Bley er en av de mest interessante unge malere i Norge dag. Hun har et særegent formspråk som treffer en balanse, hun er inspirert av forskning, litteratur og biopolitikk og evner å ta dette inn i den lange og tunge malertradisjonen på en forførende måte.

Å ta plass i rommet
Gulvets på Kunsthall Oslo er tynt. Vi har latt er oss på betong for å ikke lage flere vakkert merker enn nødvendig, men det er kjedelig at det tynt gulvet vil være all ansett som kvifvilt etter at utstillingen åpner for publikum i formiddag.

Hvert minste støvpartikkel synes på den speilblank overflaten.

Da er det en fordel at Ragna Bley arbeider i formater som går tross på all oppmerksomhet.

Det er nemlig fribende å bruke det som rommet uttrykket utvider når man beskriver maleriene i «Zoo».

For i maleriet med de dropt tre matter henger lærerne til Bley, kan en som betrakter fort føle seg noe overmannet.

Det er noe veldig spennende med det å jobbe i så store formater. Det skjer noe med maleriet til betrakteren. Man går inn i verket på en annen måte, sier Bley.

De store formatene bærer også med seg visse begrensninger som kunstneren opplever som konstruktiv utfordring.

Det er fysisk vanskelig å få til visse ting, som å male store streker i ett svei. Man har jo bare så lange armer som en har, og selv om man kan bruke hjelpemidler, innebærer det visse begrensninger. Man blir tvunget til å ta pause fordi det er så fysisk tungt, forteller Bley.

I selve maleriprosessen har de store lærerene ligget oppsett på gulv i atelieret her i Oslo sentrum.

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STORFORMAT: Det skjer noe med maleriene til betrakteren når man jobber i så store formater, sier kunstmaler Ragna Bley. Hun åpner separatutstillingen «Zoo» på Kunsthall Oslo i Bjørnli i dag.

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TIRSDAG 14. KL. 13-15
SILKEKLAR OG GJESTEBUD
Karens Krup 50p om kulturforståelse på 500-tallet

ONSDAG 15. KL. 9.30-16
SLADDER OG FØLELSER
Seminar om stillingsprøve

Ragna Bley napper i det maleriske hierarkiet i utstillingen «Zooid».

Alger i rytmer



Line Ulekleiv
KUNST

«Zooid»

Ragna Bley
Kunsthall Oslo – Munchmuseet i
bevegelse
Står til 21. mai.

ANMELDELSE

Ragna Bley
behandler formen
som en levende
enhet.

Igjen trekkes en ung kunstner inn i Munch-manesjen, og svenske Ragna Bley er et navn som absolutt er verdt å sjekke ut. Hennes abstrakte malerier treffer en tidsånd hvor det koloristiske som

energiutladninger blir møtt med stor appetitt.

Et slags premiss for samarbeidet mellom Kunsthall Oslo og Munchmuseet er en fri antakelse om hvilke unge malere kunstsamleren Rolf Stenersen (1899–1978) ville satset på dersom han levde i dag. Det forblir selvfølgelig hypotetisk, men disse punktneidslagene skyver museet inn i en fremtid som bygger opp til det nye Munchmuseet tvers over gata til kunsthallen. Men så lenge Munchmuseet på Tøyen fortsatt er i aktivitet, kunne man ønske seg et engasjement som i mindre grad er satt vekkt til andre aktører, som Kunsthall Oslo.

Bleys utstilling «Zooid» består av en rekke rause og digre

malerier i samme format – de er over tre meter høye og utført på hvite, ugrunne lerreter i seilduk. Denne stoffliggjøringen av selve flaten understreker en tanke om en unison bakgrunn. Det poengteres at vegger og gulv er malt hvite for å skape en slags totalinstallasjon, men i sannhet løftes egentlig den sedvanlige hvite kublen frem, så dette blir grepet blir oppstykket presentert.

Tittelen «Zooid» angir et slags evolusjonært perspektiv, ved å vise til et dyr eller en organisme som opptrer i flokk i uklar status mellom individ og masse – som alger eller koraller. Ved å vise til slike organiske fenomener får Bley plassert den maleriske prosessen inn i en naturgitt kontekst, utenfor det autonome maleriet som er overlatt til først og fremst å peke på seg selv.

Samtidig blir forandring og overganger mellom ulike tilstander tematisert. En haug med små knudrete bronseavstøpninger på gulvet, som tang, kreps og mikroorganis-

mer – som smuler i synsranden – understreker interessen

for de små aktørene, i kontrast til de mer monumentale lerretene, med titler som «Slouched cleft» og «Plastic sluice».

Den referanserike presentasjonen av Bleys kunst, med pekere til science fiction og naturvitenskap, kan noen ganger virke i overkant legitimerende. For prosessen siver gjennom overflaten selv. Her ligger det en åpenbar brytning.

På malerienes overflate strømmer malingen rundt og inn i ofte svært vakre pytter av en flytende palett. De danner spektrale og funklen-



VAKRE PYTTER: Hos Ragna Bley strømmer malingen rundt i pytter av flytende koloritt. FOTO: KUNSTHALL OSLO

de overganger til strammere, mer fortettede og grafiske partier. Mellom nesten usynlig dushet og farger som smeller, satt sammen som

stråler og bruddstykker. Den svake konturen av en hånd synes å sveve over en fargevirkel. Her behandler Bley den ikke-representative formen som en levende enhet. Selv om det abstrakte uttrykket også her lett blir formelbasert og generisk,

egen verdi i møter mellom former og mønster. Dette er et maleri som ikke bryr seg med å problematisere et malerisk hierarki, og beveger seg nærmest automatisk og fritt ut i en åpen sone hvor tradisjon og intuitiv inspirasjon er mer eller mindre

«Den referanserike presentasjonen av Bleys kunst kan noen ganger virke i overkant legitimerende»

også i den lenge pågående dragningen mot krystallinske mineraler som form og idé, er det fortsatt en konsentrasjon og formvisjon til stede.

sammenfallende størrelser. Likevel ligger malerihistorien der som sammenfallende indre og hentes indirekte frem i gestiske sveip. Det revolusjonerer ikke mediet, men stopper heller ikke flyten, som her fremstår som selve hovedsakten.

Bley fanger opp noe dekorativt og flyktig, dette får en

Line Ulekleiv
kunst@klassekampen.no

Leder for kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid, forskning og stipendiatprogram

Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo søker leder for kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid, forskning og stipendiatprogrammet ved skolen. Stillingen skal være den sentrale drivkraften i videreutvikling av forskningsområdet *kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid*, i samarbeid med dekaner og ansatte i undervisnings- og forskningsstillinger.

Fullstendig utlysning og søknad: www.khio.no/ledigestillinger

Søknadsfrist: 12. april 2017

KUNSTHØGSKOLEN I OSLO
OSLO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

Fra «Zoo'id» ved Kunsthall Oslo / Munchmuseet i bevegelse (11.03.-21.05.2017). Foto: Kunsthall Oslo.



M

NR 1
2017
ET KUNSTMAGASIN
FRA MUNCHMUSEET



TRE KUNSTNERE
DU BØR KJENNE TIL | Knausgård
om Munch | PORTRETT:
RAGNA BLEY | Kunstneriske
hjem

The 20 Best Booths at The Armory Show

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY ALEXXA GOTTHARDT
MAR 2ND, 2017 6:24 PM

The Armory Show underwent a successful makeover this year, opening its doors yesterday to a labyrinth of bigger booths, wider aisles, and a whopping 70 one- and two-artist presentations—making for a stronger fair. But the amount of carpeted pavement one must pound to see all 208,000 square feet hasn't abated. To help you navigate the show's two long piers, featuring presentations by 210 galleries from 30 countries, we highlight 20 booths you can't miss.

Downs & Ross

PRESENTS SECTION, BOOTH P11

WITH WORKS BY RAGNA BLEY, YANYAN HUANG



Installation view of Downs & Ross's booth at The Armory Show, 2017. Photo by Adam Reich for Artsy.

This jewel-box booth presages an exciting future for the young gallery Downs & Ross, which recently opened as a joint effort between two Lower East Side spaces, formerly known as Tomorrow and Hester. The gallery's first Armory Show presentation joins the new paintings of Oslo-based Ragna Bley and Florence-based Yanyan Huang. Both artists, according to gallery co-founder Alex Ross, “extend the language of biomorphic abstraction.” Each practice brims with exuberant, lush strokes that evoke, in Huang's work, sensuous, overflowing foliage, and in Bley's, tempestuous seas and volatile atmospheric shifts.

NICE TO MEET YOU

BY FILIPA RAMOS

A triangle, a rectangle, a circle—geometry softly dripping down from a beige canvas. A liver, a hand, a stomach—beautiful visceral masses that have their own nervous systems.

Ragna Bley (b. 1986, Uppsala, Sweden) lives and works in Oslo. Bley gained her BFA at The Oslo Academy of Fine Arts in 2011 and her MA in Painting from Royal College of Art, London in 2015. Selected exhibitions: Hester, New York (2016), Galleri Brandstrup, Oslo (2016); Bosse & Baum, London (2015); Royal College of Art, London (2015); 1857, Oslo (2015); North Norwegian Artist Association, Svolvær, Norway (2014); Taiga Art Space, St. Petersburg, Russia (2014); Kunsternes Hus, Oslo (2014); Diane Kruse Gallery, Hamburg (2014). Upcoming solo exhibition at Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo (2017).

Ragna Bley—An Idiosyncratic Abecedary

Inter-waver, Robber's robber, Two chord wake—the actual titles of three large acrylic paintings by the Swedish artist Ragna Bley, which were the starting point for this abecedarian conversation.

Bley's consistency in playing with the materiality of things and with its modes of representation lead her to dilute painting, sculpture, and story-telling into a complex body of work, in which one can encounter organic geometries, bodily forms, soft palettes, synthetic colors, and natural materials—all folded into one another. These many layers blend her interests in sci-fi literature, language, natural sciences, and biopolitics in a manner that also incorporates the disclosure of personal memory and intimacy. Abstraction has never been so concrete. Here, she has been asked by Filipa Ramos to revisit some of the tropes that her work is dealing with; the result being that of a partial, private, and deeply idiosyncratic alphabet.

ARTIFICIAL

Improved, altered, changed; improve, alter, change; improving, altering, changing; no nature; no to normality; no category; changed categories; new levels.

BLUE

"Poseidon always has *the blue eyebrows of Poseidon*."

This is from an email I got from my friend Ragnhild Aamås just before my *Pine Pitch* exhibition opened at Hester, New York, which also included this extract on the use of adjectives, from the introduction of Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red*:

"Of course there are several different ways to be. In the world of the Homeric epic, for example, being is stable and particularity is set fast in tradition. When Homer mentions blood, blood is *black*. When women appear, women are *neat-ankled* or *glancing*. Poseidon always has *the blue eyebrows of Poseidon*. Gods' laughter is *unquenchable*. Human knees are *quick*. The sea is *unwearying*. Death is *bad*. Cowards' lives* are *white*. Homer's epithets are a fixed diction with which Homer fastens every substance in the world to its aptest attribute and holds them in place for epic consumption. There is a passion in it but what kind of passion? 'Consumption is not a passion for substances but a passion for the code,' says Baudrillard."

*The first time I read this, I misread it with "Cowards' lives are *white*."

CIRCLE

Spiral, frustration, and comfort in repetition.

Or "The circle is an abstraction; the characteristic of a myriad of things, the substance of none. It is a special case in the class of ellipses (the straight line is another), as the square is a special case in the class of rectangles (again the other extreme is the straight line). The faster it spins, the less it appears to; when its spin reaches infinite velocity, the circle rests. It is a creation of the mind and, at the same time, a threat to it. In some inconceivably special situation, the wind might cause the circle to acquire direction, enter time, become a wave."

In 2011, I co-curated a show in Oslo entitled *If inside to get out, if outside to get in*; the title is borrowed from Cornelius Cardew's sextet *The Tiger's Mind*. A written text that functions as a music score. The passage above is the description of one of the six characters: the circle. The other five are: Amy, the tiger, the tree, the wind, and mind.

DISASTER

Somewhere, I read an interview with an artist. I don't remember whom, or in which context, but he talked about his work and said that everyone likes jeans, sex, and music. He was from New York.

ECOLOGY

The cup of coffee you have in the morning, you boil a litre of water, let it pour through the filter. The water footprint of that cup is 140 litres. Imagine that pouring over you as you drink that cup. Abstraction and what if. Unexpected consequences. You put on a new t-shirt. That is another 1000 litres of water. Two bathtubs. Imagine. You read the paper; while sipping your coffee; on your iPad, computer, device; while simultaneously saying hello to a friend, liking her photo, that cute dog. The news squares of images and headlines: one square, the weather (summer is looking hot); another square, football result; dinner recommendations (in-between advert slim body now); another square, 200 people killed in an earthquake. Those combinations, that number. Abstraction. Lives become numbers and the emotional response to the numbers differs; it depends. (I'm talking about you but it could also be me). It starts to rain. Time to go—a meeting, studio.

FUTURE

The other time when we came together to the filter beds, dusk, ripe blackberries we picked and ate immediately, trying to get the sweet-but-not-too-soft ones. When I was a kid and we picked wild strawberries, we had different sounds for sour and sweet. Sour was *eeee* and sweet was *oooh*. We discovered the bushes together, as it was the first time we came to earth, and in the middle, there was a platform. If we would lie down, it would have taken 15 grown people to reach from one end to the other of it. The round platform, hard but warm, concrete, was marked like that of a sun drawn by a child. "This is maybe were we landed," you said.

GHOSTLY

I would say traces but that might not be it.

HAND

I have an image on repeat in my head—it's me cutting off my own fingers with a kitchen knife. I feel the slightly uneven surface of the plastic board on my fingertips and see the knife closing down on my skin and nails. Then, when the pain should start, the image freezes and repeats. I walked with someone I know very well—and yet, not at all—and the image kept coming. It was the end of



Alpine Yellow (detail), 2016. Courtesy: the artist and HESTER, New York



Two chord wake, 2016. Courtesy: the artist and HESTER, New York



From left to right - *Inter-waver*, 2016; *Robber's robber*, 2016; *Clicks and talk*, 2016. *Pine Pitch* installation view at HESTER, New York, 2016. Courtesy: the artist and HESTER, New York

Empire Prefers Quiet Methods, 2013. Courtesy: the artist





Clove hitch, 2016. Courtesy: the artist and HESTER, New York



Neyeyeyeah, 2015. Courtesy: the artist



From left to right - *Supporter in shade*, 2015; *One-size veil*, 2015; *It took a week to remember what I already know*, 2015.
Conflicting Evidence installation view at 1857, Oslo, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and 1857, Oslo

summer and warm; the shadows from the trees on the pavement were making dark-grey branch patterns. I felt there was a lot I should say. I didn't know what and I started to think about the wrongness of having nothing to say, nothing to talk about with someone so close. But I didn't want to fill out the silences; it's not needed in that way anymore. So I was quiet. And touched my index fingers respectively with each thumb.

IRIDESCENT

I didn't know the meaning of this word, so I Googled it. I know its meaning but not the word, it turns out. Wikipedia tells me that the term comes from the Greek word *iris*, meaning rainbow, and the Latin word *-escent*, a tendency towards. I like the word. Maybe I should start using it. Another word for the same phenomena is goniochromism.

J

Is an incomplete I, an incomplete eye. Is beginning of Jr. Is the air to the throne, to the CEO position climbing too fast without effort. In my first language, it makes the sound *eee* like the first part of Jeeez. Could be Jesus, of course.

LAYERS

Interchangeable, mille-feuille, osmotic, not hermetically sealed.

LITERATURE

Images without images.

MOUTH

Women have two mouths: the upper and the lower. One should keep the upper one silent and the lower closed. Madness might come, or rather you'd be mad, if not.

The orifice through which vocal activity takes place and the orifice through which sexual activity takes place are both denoted by the word *stoma* in Greek (*os* in Latin) with the addition of adverbs *ano* or *kato* to differentiate upper mouth from lower mouth. Both the vocal and the genital mouth are connected to the body by a neck (*auchen* in Greek, *cervix* in Latin). Both mouths provide access to a hollow cavity which is guarded by lips that are best kept closed. The ancient medical writers not only apply homologous terms but also parallel medications to upper and lower mouths in certain cases of uterine malfunction. They note with interest, as do many poets and scholjasts, symptoms of physiological responson between upper and lower mouth, for example that an excess or blockage of blood in the uterus will evidence itself as strangulation or loss of voice; that too much vocal exercise results in loss of menses; that defloration causes a woman's neck to enlarge and her voice to deepen.

"Putting a door on the female mouth has been an important project of patriarchal culture from antiquity to the present day. Its chief tactic is an ideological association of female sound with monstrosity, disorder and death," wrote Anne Carson in her text, *The Gender of Sound*.

NATURE

Darling River is a book by Sara Stridsberg, a Lolita story written from Lolita's perspective. She is several women at once: the overweight child with bad teeth, the mother travelling in Europe, and the teenager in dirty clothes that meets her lovers by the muddy riverbed. Through the use of language, landscapes (driving cars through American deserts) become bodies, too. The mud, the ash from fires, the greys. Reading the book is like eating something disgusting but not being able to stop.

ORGAN

The amazing anatomical lexicon *Gray's Anatomy* sits like a bible on my shelf (together with a book from the 1970s of the first photographs from inside the body). Take the sympathetic trunk, part of the sympathetic nervous system, which "allows nerve fibres to travel to spinal nerves that are superior and inferior to the one in which they originated." Think about all the things that are still unknown.

A doctor once said to me—talking about faith, really—that if the universe is infinite and Big Bang is just a small part of it, there are infinite possibilities; if the future is infinite, at some point the combinations of the atoms that make up your body may regroup themselves and shape you again. It might just take a very long time.

PENGUIN

— Keep the egg warm.
When I dive, I catch.

QUANTUM

How much?
Grasping behind the wall, multiple possibilities, expandable fractions, too many to keep consciously alive, bouncing back and forth, as the median number of things to remember decreases after 7. Milk, bread, cucumber, toilet paper, salt, apples, yeast... Brain freeze.

RADIOACTIVE

Invisibility
NORM*
Half-life
The next generation
Deep geological repository
There is no final storage for radioactive waste. The people around where I grew up protested against the creation of a repository in one of the most stable bedrocks in the world. I visited Forsmark Nuclear Power Plant, in the north of Stockholm, went down underground, went to their visiting centre. All so clinical, so correct. I took photos with my single use camera. Mostly of the seals outside, they love the hot water from the cooling system. I was 14.

* Naturally occurring radioactive material

SEA

Another picture: lying in bed, fully dressed, soft breasts, barely the nipple is visible through the green-blue, washed-out singlet. Flannel, Radical Fitness is the tag on the trousers, as if. We continuously fall down through layers of fabric, the madras, the steel melted down through the rugged floor to the apartment under; the concrete is no problem when one is liquid to begin with. The room, the same size of another body and another bed, I melted through his skin; the power of his bloodstreams gave me an instant rush, oxygen to my blood that now was dissolved and mixed like a cream cake that is mixed and not baked; egg, flour, milk, sugar, whipped cream, strawberry jam, and just like that was my body, you become what you eat. He woke up, this strange man who now was mixed with dough, not unpleasantly surprised since he always wished for belonging, too. I whispered with my whiskey voice. I could feel his nerves get tense and if his body still would have been intact his cock would be erected. Now we were just blended and I felt his arousal as if it was mine; cream, blood, muscle fat, cells, and organs no longer of any importance. They were still there but heartbeats were changing into a rhythm; we could no longer separate because we were the same house song, low beat building up. We didn't feel we ended and no beginnings, and of course as one could expect, we continued to melt; his dirty sheets stained by many long hours of work and lonely nights were of no hinder anymore. We continued to melt because we were only still on the second floor.

SKIN

Beige brown, soft carpet, sticky table, dark short hairs, tea-stained cups, black leather chairs. A lonely plant. Dirty windows. Slight smell of garbage, incense, and male perfume.

STILL LIFE

An old man walks into the bus. It takes him a long time to climb up the low step to get on but he has his bus card ready. The bus is full. He walks slowly with his cane, a small man, reaching only to my shoulders. A woman in a black niqab gets up to leave him her seat; she also carries a cane.

STONE

Transformation and diversity of connotations. A thing (name, trope) that creates as many different images in people's minds as

there are people. A chair. Word “stone” movement in mind, barefoot on concrete steps, smooth stone on cheek washed and (g)rounded by sea and ice, build a wall, coal mine, punishment, iron ore under the ground, refined and made for landmines, exported from the tall northern country south. “Paint” movement in mind, wherever you go (with it), boredom, emotion, breakfast. (Still) may be “an image of” reveals its impotence, it shows the world yet it is not the world it is showing.*

* Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 2005

SUPERSTITION

Inside the glass-surfaced gadgets live our new gnomes. We* do things *because*; we may not know why we do it (turn the Wi-Fi button on and off three times, restart our computers, take a detour in browsing); it will just work then or we think it will improve our chances. We stop asking questions; we use the habits from older systems when dealing with new ones.

*Feel free to interpret the *We* here. It could refer to, but is not restricted to, humans who have access to those liquid crystal screens and silicon based computational devices.

I was thinking about a text I read, *Echoes of Individuation: The Black Stack, Bicameral Minds & EVP*, and the relationship between schizophrenia, hearing voices and its relationship historically with language as technology, written and spoken. I haven't read it properly, but remember being very annoyed with the arguments used.

SURFACE

How thin is a surface? I remember talking to one of my old teachers about paint rising up to the surface. I trained at a classical painting school for one year (nude painting classes from 9 to 4), and I remember so clearly some of the discussions on these painterly ways of seeing what you're doing. It's somehow easier to see with others. To tone a surface so it creates an illusion of a room, instead of jumping up and creating another illusion of being “on top” of the image. Or how to make something in a painting look like an opening, a dark room behind the open door, a cavern,—“Use a warm colour,” one of them said. “Brown. I don't know why it is so but it works.”

SYNTHETIC

Stockings. The ones we wore were always ripped. Always black ones, in layers. Always too cold in the winter.



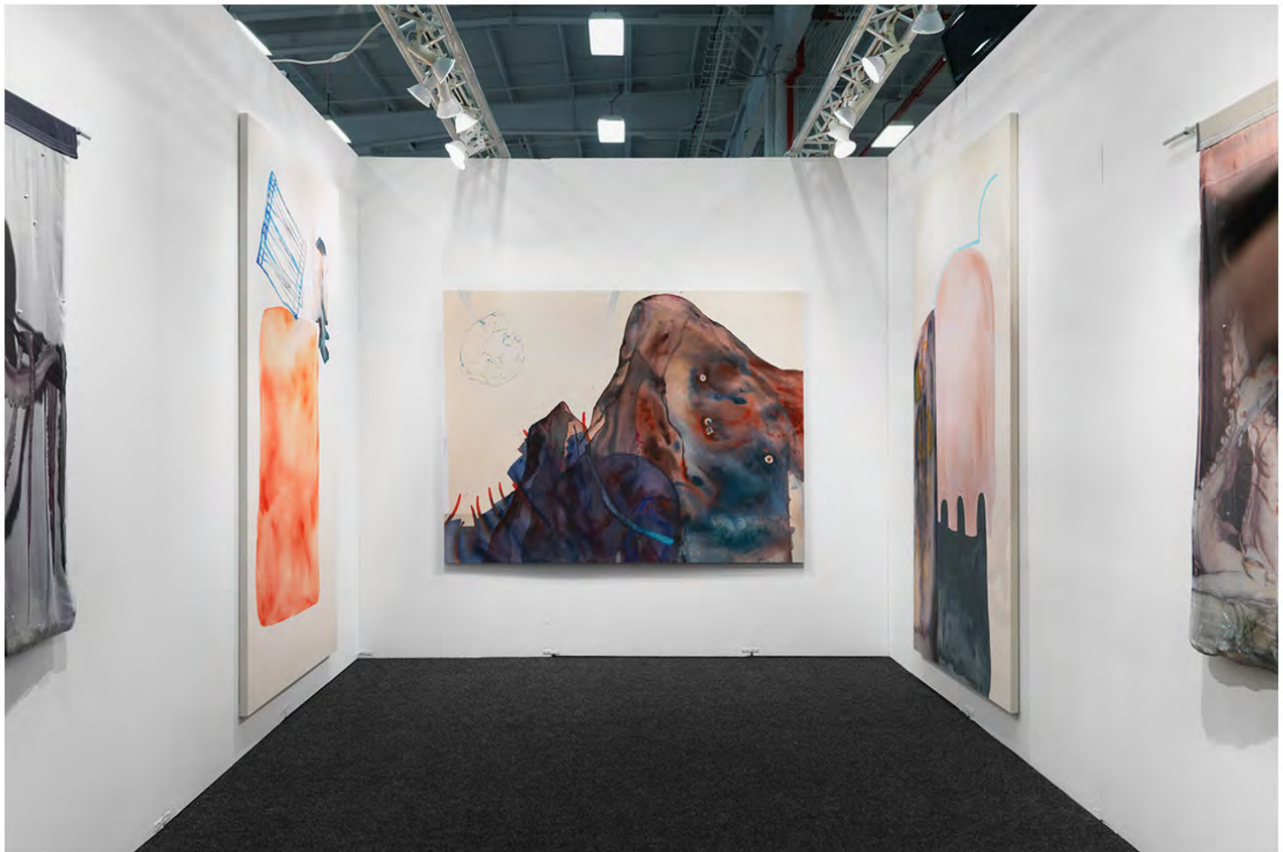
The 12 Young Painters You Need to Know at NADA New York

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY MOLLY GOTTSCHALK
MAY 6TH, 2016 10:53 PM

The fifth edition of NADA New York opened yesterday, and as ever, it was teeming with collectors and artists eager to set their sights on the fair's 108 booths. The largest edition to date, this year sees exhibitors from 18 countries and 44 cities, including 51 first-time exhibitors. It also features an especially strong selection of painting, with works by a fresh generation of young painters—including these 12 you need to know.

Ragna Bley

B. 1986 UPPSALA, SWEDEN. LIVES AND WORKS IN OSLO AND LONDON
ON VIEW AT HESTER



Installation view of works by Ragna Bley at Hester's booth at NADA New York, 2016. Photo by Object Studies for Artsy.

In sunbleached, painterly washes and amoebic, sea life forms, Bley's work recalls both the ceramics of Ron Nagle and the stain paintings of Helen Frankenthaler—but the young Swedish painter is making a name all her own. Coinciding with her first-ever solo show in the U.S. at Hester, the gallery presents three large canvases by Bley at NADA, ahead of her solo exhibition at Kunsthall Oslo in 2017.



21 New York Gallery Shows Where You'll Find Exciting Young Artists This May

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY CASEY LESSER
MAY 5TH, 2016 2:27 AM

While blockbuster shows abound in New York this month, the city's galleries are also fertile ground for finding fresh works by younger generations of artists. From impressive solos by N. Dash and Eva Kot'átková, to a group show dedicated to China's youngest generation of artists, below we highlight 21 shows that should not be missed this May.

Ragna Bley at Hester

55-59 CHRYSTIE STREET, SUITE 203, APRIL 29-MAY 29



Installation views of Ragna Bley at Hester, 2016. Photos courtesy of Hester.

For her first solo show in New York, Bley shows five paintings—tall canvases steeped with pools of color that conjure oil spills, glowing sea life, or the stain paintings of Helen Frankenthaler. The Swedish artist is influenced by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster that showered a large part of the Soviet Union with radioactive material in 1986, the year Bley was born.

EVENT HORIZON: ART HAPPENINGS AROUND NEW YORK

9 ART EVENTS TO ATTEND IN NEW YORK CITY THIS WEEK

BY *The Editors of ARTnews* POSTED 04/25/16 11:55 AM

Opening: Ragna Bley at Hester

The trope of abstract painting hinting at bodies is a tired one, but in Ragna Bley's work, it's a little more nuanced than that. Washed-out fields of color are usually pitted against off-white backgrounds, causing them to look like specimens under a microscope. Monumental in size and ambiguous in content, Bley's work evokes a combination of organic and inorganic matter. (In the past, this has been literal—one sculpture she did featured egg yolks on limestone.) For her first U.S. solo show, the young Oslo- and London-based artist will show just a few canvases, all of which are about eight feet tall. Though bigger than viewers (and Bley herself), they still feel grounded—you get the sense that a human really did make them. —*Alex Greenberger*

Hester, 55-59 Chrystie Street, 12-6 p.m.

BLOUINARTINFO

5 Must-See Booths at the Dallas Art Fair

BY Thea Ballard | April 15, 2016

Perhaps it's just the result of one too many trips to various New York City locations of Dallas BBQ, but as a newcomer to the actual city of Dallas, I arrived with many preconceptions of what an art week in this North Texas metropolis would look like. Obviously, my Yankee imagination had gotten the better of me: Dallas is home to an established, thriving, and notably congenial contemporary art scene, its major institutions (the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Contemporary, Nasher Sculpture Center) offset by collector-run kunsthalls and private collections (the Power Station, and new additions like Site 131 and the Karpidas Family Collection).

The centerpiece of Dallas Arts Week — which includes openings at most of the aforementioned institutions, as well as a number of satellite events — is the Dallas Art Fair, which kicked off its eighth edition Thursday. Housed in two stories of the Fashion Industry Gallery, with a labyrinthine layout I found weirdly pleasant to navigate, the fair is, as one dealer pointed out to me, unusually laid back. Among the 97 galleries participating this year, there's a healthy mix of fair standards, international galleries, and locals. Offerings did feel, to an extent, tailored to a certain taste. Particularly on the fair's first floor, it was hard to ignore a general sense of feel-good decorativeness about the work dealers had chosen to bring — big, bright, occasionally less-than-tasteful geometric shapes (I particularly enjoyed watching an older bottle-blond woman tote her glass of champagne around the Honor Fraser booth; her magenta chenille jacket was a perfect match for the Sarah Cain canvases on view there).

That's not to say there's not variety to be had, however. I think of the Thursday night opening at the Power Station, which included a noisy and rather long set by Karl Holmqvist and musician Stefan Tcherepnin, during which a suit-clad Holmqvist complimented Tcherepnin's fuzzy guitar loops by banging on a stool with a drumstick and smoking a cigarette. On some other end of the spectrum, a show at Site 131 inspired by Lee Lozano's art-world-dropout career arc, curated by Callicoon Fine Arts' Photios Giovanis, included a lovely and rigorous selection of work by the likes of Ulrike Müller, Bracha Ettinger, and Sadie Benning.

In closing, I would like to note that Dallas mayor Mike Rawlings *did* open his introductory remarks at the fair by stating that he had gathered us all “to talk about my football career.” So, if I may: Texas forever.

Ragna Bley at Hester

For its first year at Dallas Art Fair, this always-solid Chinatown gallery brought a gorgeous sort-of triptych — whose three large panels were painted together, but are certainly substantial as individual works — by recent Royal College of Art graduate Ragna Bley. This marks the artist's first showing in the US, and she'll soon have a proper solo at Hester. Fellow downtown New York gallery Tomorrow shares the booth, with a pair of works by Carlos Reyes.

PREVIEW THE 2016 DALLAS ART FAIR

[◀ BACK TO ARTICLE](#)



Hester, New York

Ragna Bley, *One-size veil*, 2015, acrylic on canvas.



10 Artworks to Collect at Dallas Art Fair

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY ALEXXA GOTTHARDT

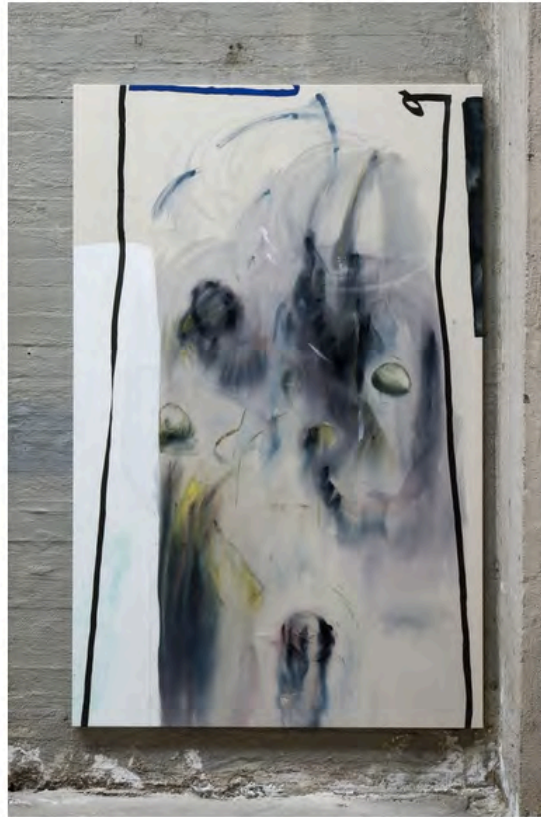
APR 12TH, 2016 12:08 AM

This Thursday, the Dallas Art Fair will open its largest edition yet, hosting 97 galleries from 17 countries across its sprawling space, situated next to Dallas Museum of Art in the city's downtown Arts District. New work by up-and-coming artists like Ragna Bley, Margo Wolowiec, and Calvin Marcus is the fair's strongest suit, while exceptional works by older, lesser-known artists like Barbara Kasten, Garth Evans, and Simone Fattal also stand out.

Ragna Bley, *One-size veil*, 2015

AVAILABLE AT:

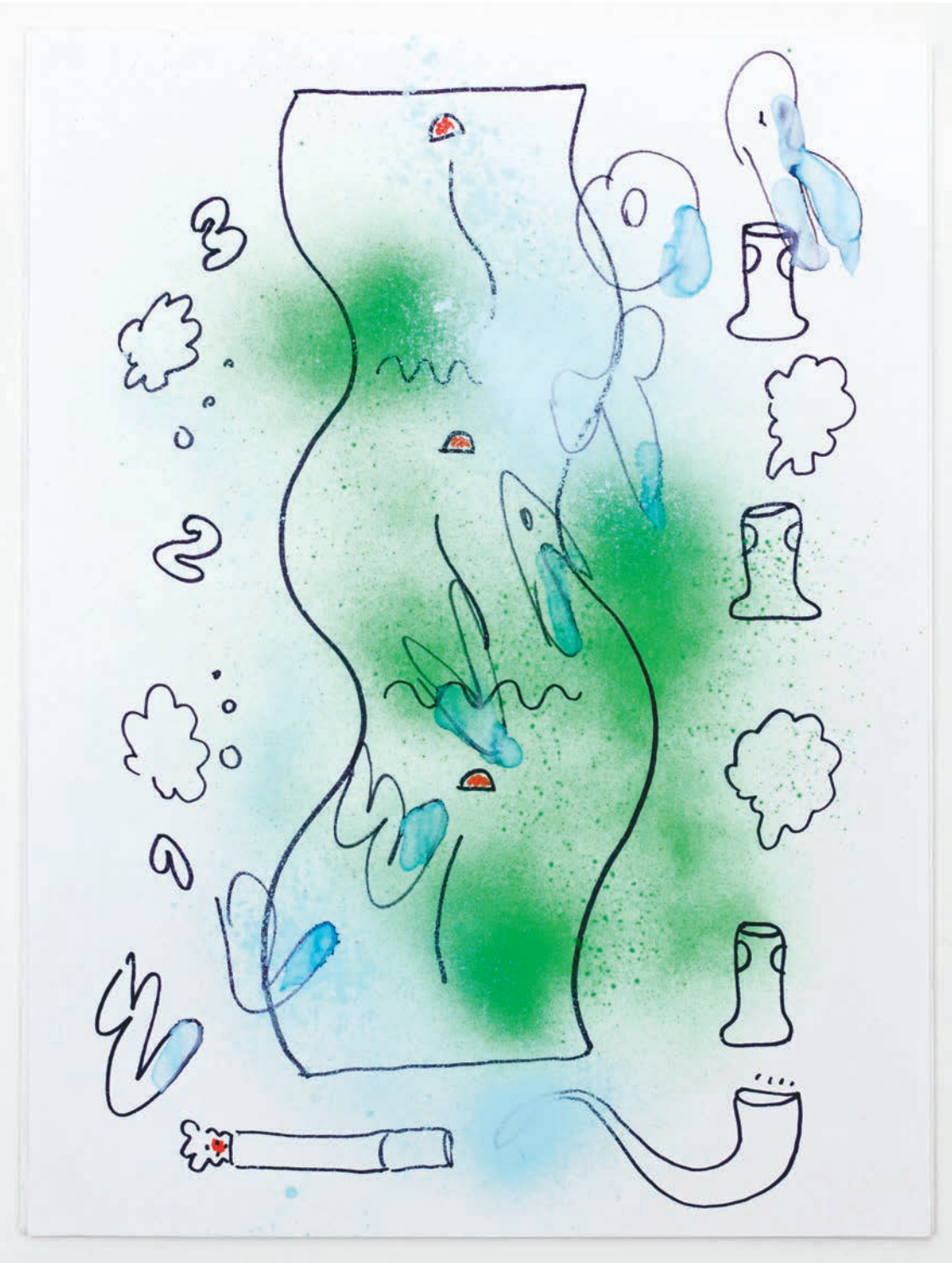
HESTER, Booth C6



Ragna Bley
One-size veil, 2015
Hester

After graduating from Royal College of Art's MFA program last year, Bley was picked up by the Lower East Side's HESTER gallery, who will be showing her mesmerizing large-scale paintings at the fair. The fair marks the Oslo and London-based artist's first U.S. outing, and will serve as a preview to her forthcoming solo show at the gallery, opening later this month. The shapes that populate Bley's canvases are defined by soft, gauzy edges and cloudy centers that at times resemble figures, landscapes, or the mysterious, churning substances that fill crystal balls. In this piece, an area of grey, blue, and black paint is punctuated by three circles that, at a glance, could be nipples and a phallus. It's this kind of ambiguity that powers the young artist's work, which is also slated for a solo exhibition at the Kunsthall Oslo in 2017.

BILLEDDOKUMST



Fra messen NADA Miami Beach (repr. gjennom 1857) i Florida (03.-05.12.2016). Foto: 1857.

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NYHETER
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Nr 1-2016-kr 75,-

↑ Tora Dalseng
Elevator (2015)
Tusj penn, akvarell og
spraymaling på papir
30 × 40 cm

DET MAN SNUBLER OVER

Ragna Bley er ikke på jakt etter løsninger og svar. Starten på et prosjekt kan komme gjennom lykkelige sammentreff eller uhell. I april åpner hennes første større separatutstilling ved HESTER i New York.

– Flere av arbeidene dine synes å være fortellende, slik som *Empire Prefers Quiet Methods* fra 2013 – et «marmorarbeid» i skumplast. Hvordan jobber du?

– Jeg vil gjerne at arbeidene mine skal ha en slags tvetydighet, og de kan bære referanser til for eksempel historie, samtidig som det er en åpenhet og humor til stede. At de kan oppleves som gåtefulle, handler kanskje om at jeg hverken er på jakt etter svar eller løsninger, men jobber med ulike materialer og et slags arkiv med ideer som jeg bærer med meg over lengre tid før de får rett «form». *Empire (...)* var nok et typisk eksempel på denne arbeidsmetoden hvor det hele begynte med at jeg «snublet» over noe. Jeg fikk masse skumplast gratis gjennom en madrassbutikk og visste ikke riktig hva jeg skulle bruke det til, så jeg prøvde ut mange ulike teknikker før jeg tilfeldigvis sølte maling utover det... Da jeg skulle tørke opp malingen, oppdaget jeg at avtrykket liknet marmor. Samtidig søkte jeg opp litteratur om materialet – om dets status i en historisk kontekst; fra maktsymbol til kitsch, om arkitektur, makt og forfall. Og marmorkopier var for øvrig vanlige allerede i det gamle Rom, da man forsøkte å imitere gresk arkitektur.

- Dette nummeret av *Billedkunst* rekker akkurat å komme ut før du er med på en gruppeutstilling ved Galleri Brandstrup (11.02.–20.03.). Hva får vi se?
- Det blir flere større malerier og muligens også noen skulpturelle elementer. Jeg tenker mye på hvordan rom, avstand og rytme har innvirkning på arbeidene, både i og mellom de ulike verkene. Jeg trives også når jeg kan ha et konkret rom/visningsrom i bakhodet mens jeg jobber.
- I april åpner dessuten din første større separatutstilling, ved New York-galleriet HESTER.
- Ja, jeg ble kontaktet av galleriet i høst, og ganske kort tid etter ble det bestemt

at jeg skulle ha en separatutstilling der. HESTER er et nyåpnet galleri som har hatt mange fine utstillinger, så jeg ser virkelig frem til å arbeide der! Det blir en kombinasjon av skulptur og maleri, med et slags utgangspunkt i et mytologisk og science-fiction-aktig historisk preg. Men deler av utstillingen vil også få lov til å fremstå som mer fragmentariske og abstrakte... Mer vil jeg nok ikke fortelle for øyeblikket.

- I fjor mottok du reisestipend fra Unge Kunstneres Samfund (UKS) – hva vil vi kunne se fra reisen?
- Jeg var i Nairobi i Kenya i fire uker rett før jul. En veldig inspirerende reise der jeg skrev mye og tok bilder. Hva slags form prosjektet vil ta, er for tidlig å si, men det blir sannsynligvis en kombinasjon av tekst og objekter som kommer til å skape et nytt narrativ. Prosjektet er dessuten knyttet til min egen familiehistorie. Oldefar skrev blant annet en bok etter å ha vært i Øst-Afrika på begynnelsen av 1900-tallet, og vi hadde mange gjenstander derfra hjemme under oppveksten – fra antilopehorn til fotografier og en elefantfot som fungerte som en krukke...
- I desember hadde jeg en opplesning/performance av en sci-fi-tekst som jeg

skrev i Nairobi på stunt-utstillingen «If it bends it's funny (if it breaks it's not funny)» i lokalene til Bosse & Baum i London. Det var første prosjekt fra arbeidsoppholdet vist utenfor atelieret. Til høsten blir det en større utstilling sammen med de andre kunstnerne som mottok reisestipend, i regi av UKS.

Ragna Bley (f. 1986 i Uppsala i Sverige) bor og arbeider i Oslo og London. Hun er utdannet ved Kunstakademiet i Oslo (2011) og Royal College of Art i London (2015) og arbeider hovedsakelig med maleri og skulptur, ofte figur- og tekstfragmenter kombinert med et abstrakt formspråk. Hun deltok nylig på gruppeutstillingene «Conflicting Evidence» (1857) og «Young Pioneers» (Kunsthall Oslo), begge i 2015, samt utstillinger ved prosjektrummet Taiga i St. Petersburg, Nordnorsk Kunstnersenter (NNKS) og Diane Kruse Galerie i Hamburg i 2014. Bley var blant de syv som mottok reisestipend fra Unge Kunstneres Samfund (UKS) i fjor. Nå står blant annet utstillinger ved UKS og New York-galleriet HESTER for tur.

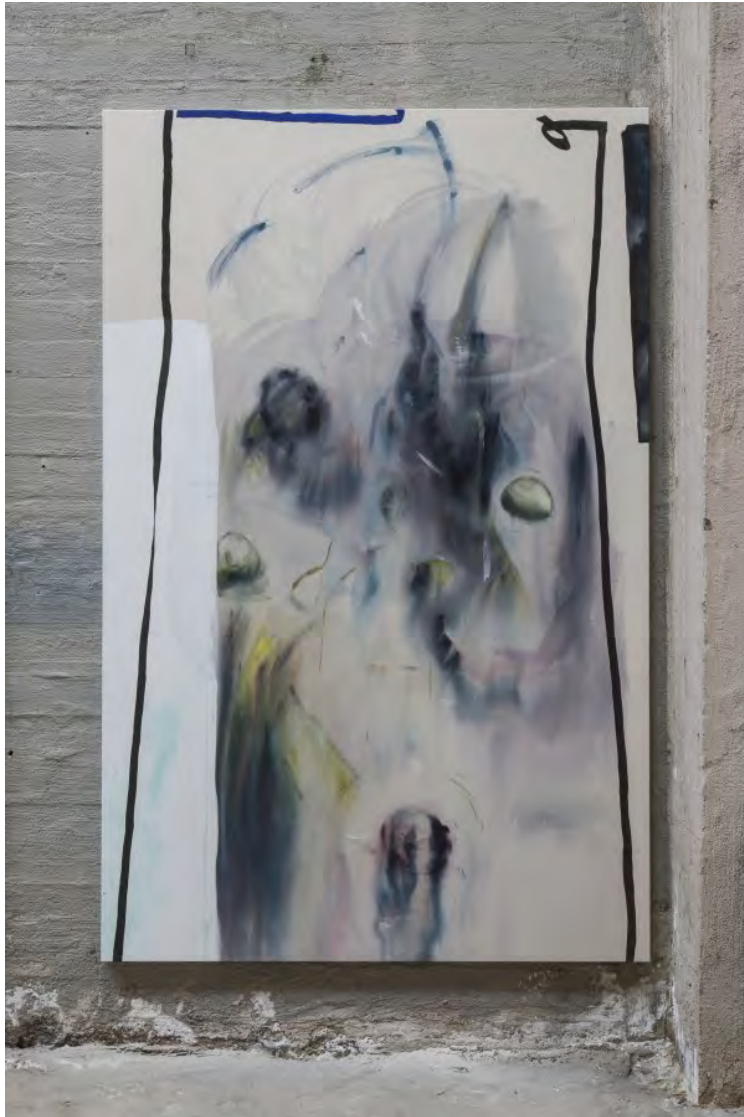
↓ Bley i atelieret. Foto: Ruozhe Xue.



Contemporary Art Daily

“Omelette” at 1857

August 19th, 2015



Artists: Ragna Bley, Magni Borgehed, Hi-5, Tom Humphreys, Mirak Jamal, Carl Mannov

Venue: 1857, Oslo

Exhibition Title: Omelette or Conflicting Evidence

Date: June 5 – August 16, 2015

Press Release:

For “*Omelette*” 1857 moves into the territoire of painting at full throttle, and for once with the bulk of the artists sprung from the local scene. But what is left of the nnn when the nn is in exchange with the nnnnn?

Let’s just begin with a yawn. Come on now, a big yawn. Hhhhhhhhhh.. (up up up) – (and descending):
Aaaaaahhhhhhhh.. That’s it. Not to demonstrate boredom, oh no! but to prepare for this with some extra oxygen.
To synchronize the tribe around the bonfire.

Now, didn’t that feel refreshing? Okay, here we go.

For its five-year-anniversary 1857 has put together a painting show for their grand summer spectacle. The gallerists have been thinking about this for some time. We last met at a masquerade in the southern hemisphere last January. Veiled behind a hare and a turtle mask they drunkenly exclaimed their long time desire to compile an exhibition sober in its loyalty to this chief category of art, and further elaborated on the enjoyable challenge of arranging it in the cool chill and day-lit diction of their concrete space. By far more welcoming in summer, the hare said. By far more welcoming in summer, the turtle said.

The space is by far more welcoming in the summer. During winter it is as gloomy and rough as a Jack London campsite. And a challenging place for artworks of organic components all year round. A potential factor in a bonanza of Oil on Canvas, n’est-ce pas? The apparatus frequently seen in museums, the hydrothermograph, would be as superfluous there as a thermometer in hell. Not everyone would want to expose their paintings to such dire conditions? “Not slow-pacing tight-ass figurativists, that’s for sure”, one of them said to a common friend reluctant to take part. But never mind all this and let’s start outside.

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It’s high noon and I’m standing on the sidewalk across the street. They’re expecting me now, but the sun pours down Tøyenbekken and I’m giving myself a few minutes méditatives to consider my expectations, ponder the gallery and its paratexts. For five years this mini-institution has produced some the most fresh and remarkable shows seen in this part of Europe, and gained well-deserved awe and attention in the art-zoo. Most of their fans and followers have never even been in the actual building, that’s for sure. So I’m stalling for a second to gain the most from my presence. Experience 1857 in its intégralité, so to speak. From face to behind, guts to brain.

Through the office windows I see the two guys in lively conversation constantly halted by short sessions of tapping on their laptops. They laugh a lot while performing silly gestures with their arms and heads. Naturally, I can’t hear what they discuss, but if I let my paranoia loose, the gestures can in some way be reminiscent of my own work, writing and ideology—trans- lated into a comical act. A red bus roars past and a line of cars blocks my sight. When the window reappears they both eat ice cream and salute each other gaily with tiny espresso cups. An assistant enters with a bucket. She empties it in the sink before sitting down in the third chair, fatigued.

The ugly, little house, doing little to improve the view for the neighbours vis-à-vis, rises one more floor. From the rooftop a rusty iron facade stands as a wall, the only indicator of the large volume hidden in the back. It used to be a big, brown and bulky monochrome, subtle in its sobriety, but now it’s been the victim of, or the happy backdrop for, a graffiti piece and stands out like a white grin. As I step inside the guys pop up to shake my hand. The assistant is introduced and sets off to prepare another round of coffee.

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The exhibition comprises five artists and an undefined collective. The selection is surprisingly local, and Scandinavian, in light of the gallerists’ proclaimed focus on international artists – whatever that means anyway. Swede Ragna Bley and Dane Carl Mannov are familiar names, as well as faces, on the Oslo scene, and both have

already been extensively exhibited in the city. Previous principles regarding internationality and novelty seem to crumble, but perhaps 1857 has decided to finally put their own house in order. Magni Borgehed is another Swede, who lives and works in his native country, apparently far into the woods, while the British painter Tom Humphreys is the most established artist in the mix—in shrill contrast to the locally based Hi-5 collective, that though deliberately kept in the dark, I still deduce to have no insight, nor interest, in contemporary art whatsoever. Nevertheless they make their gallery début here. If Berlin based artist Mirak Jamal rings a bell, it might be because he curiously enough also was included in the last show at 1857, but with something quite different from what is on display now. —I was in Berlin a month back for the Gallery Weekend and the new series he presented in his studio was so damn good and fitting that we just had to throw it in there, Stian says with much enthusiasm.

In the wacky antechamber with the orange floor Mannov, Borgehed and Jamal form an elegant and light-hearted trio. A group of paintings by Borgehed is what first catches the eye. The press release presents him as a Painter, with capital P, whose curiosity and playfulness give rise to, and thrive in, a constant outpouring. His dedication to painting is fundamentally an interest in the possibilities of applying and arranging paint on a canvas. The works have something generational to them, as if he is the heir and current practitioner in a long bloodline of craftsmen in the service of a radical modesty.

Throughout the show Mannov participates with a series of small works. His technique is more complex and styled than Borgehed's. Or perhaps only more à la mode? On a smooth airbrushed background, added layers of strokes and figures shift place in variations of a motive that repeatedly maps out the front section of a motorcycle caught in a sea of wavy flames – commemorating and celebrating the times back in the 1990s when this space was the fortified siège social of the motorcycle gang The Outlaws.

Jamal offers only a teaser in the front space with a piece that in every way resembles painting, but has had its usual components replaced with other tools and materials. Nervous, machine-made scars and cuts together with engraved drawings create twitchy white inscriptions in a coloured plasterboard, sporadically decorated with spray-paint and prints. This overture is tight and agreeable. For once both color and jest goes well with the arrangements floraux, but I'm still thinking when are they going to get rid of that floor. —NEVER! Steffen exclaims and pushes me into the main space.

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—Let's say that painting of the third millennium has evolved from Renaissance to Mannerism, Stian says ceremoniously, and gesticulates left and right, and I can't make out if it's an ironic joke or a personal belief. The works are scattered, even hung up high, out of reach. A perfectly square, freestanding wall suggests a division of the space. It is fully covered with a facsimile of a New Baroque tapestry from the 1870-80s, similar to fragments peaking up behind the drywall in the gallery.

Standing upright alone it becomes a paravent chinois, flirtingly limiting full disclosure, tickling my desire to step around it. A jalousie. —Nope, more like an all-over pattern painting, they say. —Painting as decoration, they say. A vertical carpet too, they say. A painting is a vertical carpet. A poster too, they say, and tap twice on the wall with a skeletal finger. Corbusier said that a painting is a portable mural, Stian says. —Well, no, 'tapestry', Steffen says. —Tapestry, I mean, Stian says. Actually, he said 'nomadic', Steffen says. —Poor man's portable painting, Stian says. —Mural, Steffen says. —Mural, Stian says. —The wall is also domesticating it? I say. —What? they say. —Well, this space, I say. —Well, sure, Steffen says. —But if painting as embellishment.., I begin. —Listen, they say. And then follows a rant, but their further elaboration of its purpose in this context is so back-breakingly confusing and contradictoire that I just let them talk themselves to the end while casting glances around. A monumental triptych by Bley displays soft rectangles, windows, enclosing abstract patterns, stretching from one canvas to the next, completed on a long stretch of cotton canvas, then cut up and stretched on stretchers. Not abstract enough to escape a Rorschach effect, but maybe, that is because I'm thirsty. They are a visually soothing, though palpating, distraction to the tirade in the rumbling cathedral. Eventually dying out. —Right, I say. They exchange glances. —Any questions? Steffen asks. —Not right now, I say.

On the backside hangs a work by Hi-5. It is a medium-sized painting with a few dots, lines and twirls of spray on an untreated canvas. Technically realizable in one minute, a mope might say. I like it at first, but quickly feel it lacks intention, slightly confused by its indifference and simplicity. Awkwardly out of place on the tapestry background. Again, I inquire who or what, entre nous? The assistant enters with a tray of refreshments. The guys both reach for the same cake, their hands collide, coffee is spilled, and a Danish is knocked to the ground. I pick it up and consequently make it my choice. — We have to keep our sacred oath, Stian says, complacently nibbling at the bone of contention. — But come for the opening and see who seems alienated and out of place. And I am left wondering if this is just some cerebral practical joke. — It won't be a farce if no one tumbles over, Steffen says, doubly vexed. — Or hurts their head, Stian says, pointing to his head. I hold up my pâtisserie as a counterpoint. — It doesn't have a soul, Steffen says.

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I say that I think I'm alright now and prefer further contemplation en solitaire. — Absolutely, they say cheerfully, immediately striding back to the office and leaving me alone. Silence ensues. I lightly kick the wall and turn around with a flourish.

But lo'! More by Jamal combat the paravents sole protrusion into the volume. Full-sized sheets of green drywall take further calculated steps away from painterly conventions and, plops, enter my realm: l'espace! I walk up close, tilt my head, consider the epitome of a mustached man, scratched and cut.

But behold! I observe the panels of Humphreys' where they reside on the walls. A chorale of two. No brush has served them paint; no hand can reach them now. In this innermost salle I pace extravagantly from wall to wall, within flames and hallucinations and silhouettes both soft and sharp. The blue poster wall and its pimpled painting is surely mon souffleur. From my NN-A Astrup Fearnley tote bag I pull up the checklist and some leftover pop pops from the National Day, and I read the titles, memorize works, tick off names and celebrate with pangs of alarm, hurriedly lest my guides reappear to halt my delight.

It is a feast of paintings, and I am in its very midst. I hold up the victimized Danish like a skull in my hand, brushing off the concrete dust, and some crust and frosting too. — Oh, where be your wit now? I cry. — Where be your ridicule? Where be your excellent fancy? I softly touch its egg yolk lips. But the Danish lacks intention. And only replies: Eat me.

About the artists:

Ragna Bley (b. 1986, Uppsala) lives and works in London and Oslo. Her work is currently part of *Young Pioneers* at Kunsthall Oslo. Recent shows include *Screen Saver*, Dyson Gallery, London; *The Foyer Exhibition*, Kunsternes Hus, Oslo; *What Thinks Me*, Taiga Art Space, St Petersburg; *We met at the far end of the landscape and both acted shy*, Grünerløkka Kunsthall & Podium, Oslo; *Read Your Call*, Gallery Diane Kruse, Hamburg; and *Leather Body— Feather Scope* at LNM Oslo. This summer Bley receives her MA from Royal College of Art in London, after which she will travel to Nairobi, Kenya, on a travel grant with a subsequent exhibition at UKS, Oslo, in 2016.

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Magni Borgehed (b. 1982, Växjö) lives and works in Sikås, Jämtland. Recent shows include *Last Resort*, Copenhagen; *DOMA biennale*, Sofia; Loyal Gallery, Stockholm; Lumba Kuda, Penang; MODEL, Vancouver; Contemporary Art Center of Portland; Växjö konsthall, Växjö; Gallery Henningsen, Copenhagen; Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna. Recent performances include Västerbottens Museum, Umeå (with Rasmus West) and Disjecta, Portland (with Matthew Lutz-Kinoy). Borgehed is the founder of Sikås Art Center in Hammerdal, Sweden.

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The Hi-5 crew is an Oslo-based collective with no insight, nor interest, in contemporary art.

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Tom Humphreys (b. 1972, Essex) lives and works in London. Recent solo shows include *Bird Food* at What Pipeline, Detroit; *Natural History* at Christian Andersen, Copenhagen; *Tours* at High Art, Paris; and *Casa Párticularat* Rob Tufnell, London. He has been part of group shows at Michael Thibault, Los Angeles; Rob Tufnell, Brussels; Thomas Duncan Gallery, Los Angeles; Supportico Lopez, Berlin; Peles Empire, London; and Bergen Kunsthall. From 2003 – 2007 he ran the space Flaca in London. Upcoming group shows include *Potteries Thinkbelt* at Rob Tufnell, London and *Over you/you, Ljubljana Biennial*, Slovenia.

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Mirak Jamal (b. 1979, Tehran) continues his streak of exhibition-making at 1857 after *An Account of Discovery and Wonder*; among other recent shows are early works at Kinderhook & Caracas; *Windowlicker* at Center; and *Deeeee*, all in Berlin; as well as at the Arran Gallery, Tehran; Thomas Erben Gallery, New York; the *Marrakech Biennale 4*; and the *2011111111111s project*, which traveled from Berlin to Tokyo. With Santiago Taccetti he is a founder of an ongoing collaborative project of outdoor exhibitions called Stoneroses. He has lived and worked in Minsk; Cologne; Texas; Minnesota; Toronto; and currently resides in Berlin.

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Carl Mannov (b. 1990, Copenhagen) lives and works in Oslo. He is currently exhibiting with Chris Hood at Rod Barton in London. Recent solo exhibitions in Oslo include: *Pro-pods and bullpens* at One Night Only, Kunstnernes Hus; Prosjektrommet, Trafo Kunsthall; *No buddy but our shelves*, Oslo Prosjektrom; and *Rambuk* at Kazachenko's Apartment. Among recent group shows in Oslo are *Mind & Matter*, *LYNX*, *Høstutstillingen*, Kunstnernes Hus; *Summer Slumber Super Salon*, *Demon's Mouth*; and *Maleri=divergens* at Podium.

1857 is supported by Arts Council Norway

Downs & Ross

96 Bowery, 2nd Floor, New York NY 10013

RAGNA BLEY

b. 1986, Uppsala, Sweden
Lives and works in Oslo

EDUCATION

MA, Royal College of Art, London 2015
BFA, The National Academy of Art, Oslo 2011

SELECTED SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Soundings, Downs & Ross, New York 2021
Ragna Bley & Inger Ekdahl, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden 2020
Ariel, Copenhagen 2020
Pluto, OSL Contemporary, Oslo 2018
Zoid, Kabuso Art House, Øystese, Norway 2018
Lay Open, Frankfurt Am Main, Berlin 2017
Zoid, Kunsthall Oslo in association with The Münch Museum, Oslo 2017
Superbody Sweet, Editorial, Vilnius 2017
Armory Show 2017, with Downs & Ross, New York 2017
Pine Pitch, Hester, New York 2016
Leather Body - Feather Scope, Gallery LNM, Oslo 2013
Så nære vi var, with Inga Sund Hofset, Podium, Oslo 2011
Retrorespection, Semikolon Gallery, Oslo 2011
To the Quagmires, Gallery 21:25, Oslo 2010
You Love the Way I Look at You, One Night Only Gallery, Oslo 2009
Ideal Worlds, with Karin Erixon, Fisk Gallery, Bergen, Norway 2009

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Editorial, Vilnius 2019
Wiggle Wiggle, Corridor Project Space, Amsterdam 2019
Tempo Tempo Tempo, Kistefos-museet, Kistefos 2019
The Moderna Exhibition, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2018
Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen 2018
Entangled Tales, Rupert, Vilnius, Lithuania 2018
The Oslo Museum of Contemporary Art, Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo 2017
Nuuk Nordisk Kulturfestival, Nuuk, Greenland 2017
The Norwegian Sculpture Biennial at The Vigeland Museum, Oslo 2017
XVI International Painting Triennial, Vilnius 2016
UKS, Young Artists Society, Oslo 2016
Variations in Scandinavian Abstraction, Galleri Brandstrup, Oslo 2016
If it bends it's funny, If it breaks it's not funny., Bosse & Baum Gallery, London 2015
Degree show, Royal College of Art, London 2015
Conflicting Evidence, 1857, Oslo 2015
Young Pioneers, Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo 2015
Screen Saver, Dyson Gallery, London 2015
Menneskeberget, Edvard Munch's studio Ekely, Oslo 2015
Kunstprisen 2015, Sandefjord Kunstforening, Sandefjord 2015
Marken vi står på, North Norwegian Artist Association, Svolvær, Norway 2014
What Thinks Me, Taiga Art Space, St. Petersburg, Russia 2014
The Foyer Exhibition, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo 2014
We met at the far end of the landscape and both acted shy,
Grünerløkka Kunsthall, Podium, Oslo 2014

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ReadYourCall, Diane Kruse Gallery, Hamburg, Germany	2014
WIP, Henry Moore Gallery, Royal College of Art, London	2014
Secret RCA, Dyson Gallery, London	2014
Summer Doldrums residency exhibition, Kunsthall Oslo	2013
Det enkle potensiale, Backspace, Oslo	2013
Sellout, UKS, Young Artists Society, Oslo	2012
The Strange Fete (End), MFAPS, Oslo	2011
En vinterreise, MFAPS, Oslo	2011
Let the lovin take ahold. Stribsendberg collection of modern art..., UKS, Oslo	2011
The Educational Art Show, MFAPS, Oslo	2011
If inside to get out - if outside to get in, Søylegalleriet, Oslo	2011
;akademi- PO, The National Academy of Fine Arts, Oslo	2010
Group exhibition, Knekt Gallery, Oslo	2010
Multiples, Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo	2009
Pool (avec), Sjokoladefabrikken, Oslo	2009
Moonlight Starlight Sunshine, SKA, Oslo	2009
Initiation, Gallery 21:25, Oslo	2009

CURATORIAL & OTHER PROJECTS

Public art project, Holbæk Art, Holbæk	2020
Visting lecturer, Rietveldt Academy, Amsterdam	2019
Visting lecturer, Malerskolen, Kunstakademien, Copenhagen	2019
Visting lecturer, Exhibition Laboratory, University of Helsinki	2019
Digital work together with Pragheeta Sharma for Triple Canopy, New York	2018
Presentation of works at Chart Art Fair, Charlottenburg, Copenhagen with OSL Contemporary	2018
Residency, Rupert, Vilnius	2017
Presentation of works Armory, New York with Downs and Ross	2017
Visiting lecturer at Royal College of Art, London	2016
Visting lecturer, Fine Art, Royal College of Art, London	2016
Presentation at NADA Miami, with Hester, New York	2016
Presentation at Dallas Art Fair with Hester, New York	2016
Visiting lecturer, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow	2015
Curator, We met at the far end... Grünerløkka Kunsthall, Podium, Oslo	2014
Assistant Curator, Lære for livet, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Bærum	2012
Curator, If inside to get out - if outside to get in, Holodeck, Oslo	2011
Responsible for the lecture series Open Forum, Oslo Academy of Fine Art	2010
Curator, Pool (avec), (with Ruben Steinum), Sjokoladefabrikken, Oslo	2009

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Working grant, Ingvild Lindbäck Langaard's Foundation	2018
Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Culture Residency Grant	2017
Hine Painting Prize, Royal College of Art, London	2015
Travel grant, The Young Artists Society, UKS, Norway	2015
Sandefjord Kunstforening Art Prize for Young Art shortlist, Norway	2014
Exhibition Support from The Norwegian Arts Council	2014
Project Support from Billedkunstnerenes Vederlagsfond	2014
Ingvild Lindbäck Langaard Foundation Scholarship, Norway	2013
Annual Working Grant, Billedkunstnerenes Vederlagsfond, Norway	2013
Exhibition support, The Norwegian Arts Council	2013
Annual Working Grant, Billedkunstnerenes Vederlagsfond, Norway	2012
Exhibition Grant from The Norwegian Arts Council	2012

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Foundation for Art and Design Students' Grant, 2010
The National Academy of Arts, Oslo

SELECTED PRESS

Smalls, Rachel. "Profile: Ragna Bley," TheGuide.Art, March 1 2021
Anana, Billy. " Ragna Bley's Cerebral, Swirling Abstractions," Hyperallergic, 2021
February 24
Kherbek, William. "Ragna Bley & Inger Ekdahl at Malmö Konsthall," Flash Art, 2020
April 7
Chan, TF. "Chart Fair: The Unmissable Highlights," Wallpaper, August 30, 2018 2018
Acha, Gabriel. "Critic's Guide: Berlin," Frieze, June 26 2017
Uleklied, Line. "Ragna Bley napper i det maleriske hierarkiet i utstillingen «Zoid»" 2017
Klassekampen, March 22
Gotthardt, Alexxa. "The 20 Best Booths at The Armory Show," Artsy, March 2 2017
Helesvig, Simen Joachim, "Materials Seeking Form," Kunstkritikk, March 20 2017
Forbes, Alexander, "71 New Galleries Mark Major Overhaul for New York's 2016
Armory Show," Artsy, November 22
Ramos, Filipa. "Ragna Bley—An Idiosyncratic Abecedary," Mousse Magazine No.54 2016
Gottschalk, Molly. "12 Young Painters You Need to Know at NADA 2016
New York," Artsy, May 6
Lesser, Casey. "21 New York Galleries Where You'll Find Exciting Young 2016
Painters this May," Artsy, May 5
Editors at ArtNews. "9 Art Events to Attend in New York City This Week," 2016
ArtNews, April 24
Ballard, Thea. "5 Must-See Booths at the Dallas Art Fair," Blouin Artinfo, April 15 2016
Editors at ArtNews. "Preview the 2016 Dallas Art Fair," ArtNews, April 13 2016
Gotthardt, Alexxa. "10 Artworks to Collect at Dallas Art Fair," Artsy, April 12 2016
"Det Man Snubler Over," Bildekunst, Nr. 1 2016
"Omelette at 1857," Contemporary Art Daily, August 19 2015

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden
National Gallery of Norway, Oslo
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Kistefosmuseet, Jevnaker
Malmö Konstmuseum, Malmö