

Opening Friday, 23 June 2017, 6-9pm

I know someone who thinks the coffee in Naples is the best in the world. So he decided to buy a pack of his favorite coffee while he was there to take home with him. Since the coffee he made at home wasn't nearly as good, he came to the conclusion that the high quality was down to the water. The next time he was in Naples, he took some water back. But it was the same story, the cup of coffee at home just didn't compare to the coffee by the Gulf of Naples. Finally, he understood that it was the atmosphere that made it taste so good and that he would have to enjoy it *in situ*.

Installations by Margrét H. Blöndal are a little like that cup of coffee. Not just because they draw their meaning from their location and their internal context, but also because they feature an element of uncertainty, an unknown quantity like the atmosphere in Naples, which we might call the X-Factor and makes it impossible to predict results or move an exhibition from one location to another. It can also be difficult to precisely define the source of a work's beauty and attraction, a little like air slipping through your fingers or trying to catch a butterfly. This is surely the reason that Margrét's drawings have been compared to reading a book of poetry and her installations with musical compositions, where each unit, each sculpture is like a single note in the whole. Her delicate drawings, completed using olive oil, watercolors and pencil - many kinds of transparency, really - create a distinctive intimacy, a remarkable heart-to-heart with the viewer. A form is carved out, someone stretches up and someone sits down, but the meaning is determined not only by what is inside the frame, but also the way in which the drawing is presented in the space. The space between the drawings plays a role similar to a silence in music and as in a baroque painting, the movement - the line or form - escapes the two-dimensional wall out into the three-dimensional space, so that the narrative is without a beginning and an end.

In Margrét H. Blöndal's work the material world is closely related to perception and sense of touch. Although the objects that she chooses to bring into the gallery (perhaps it would be more fitting to say of what she 'pulls' or 'draws them in') have a history related to their function, Margrét uses them like any other abstract or raw material in her sculptures and transforms them: engraves them, rips, breaks, crumples, twists, pulls and stretches. Perhaps people will catch a glimpse of something from a kitchen, (such as a piece of rubber reminiscent of a pink washing up glove), while something else elicits memories of the hand crafts of our foremothers (for example a reel of twine or a crocheted cloth). But as the brain struggles to logically link the objects to our previous knowledge and experiences, the artist is busy endowing each object with a new personality, creating 'individuals' that are at the same time part of a group, engaged in dynamic conversation among themselves within the space. In Margrét's installations, it has often been possible to detect a curious balancing act whereby a small piece of material or an unremarkable plastic shape challenges a solid, rectangular mass of concrete, counterbalances a ceiling, columns, a wooden floor or flagstones. A space is never neutral and as soon as an artist changes the balance of power in the space by setting static material in motion, she imbues it with new meaning, appropriates it. Perhaps we might say that the sculptures 'draw' the space anew and are therefore her drawings in another form. Unless people prefer to liken Margrét to abstract painters scattering colours and shapes around the room? On her journey in search of clues.

Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir

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