

Margrét H. Blöndal - Meander

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Strange things happen when encountering the drawings and object assemblages of Margrét H. Blöndal. The experience feels unusual, though the objects are often familiar. Things may be propped, hang or tied around the gallery; objects clustered in conversation. The eloquence of these arrangements is complicated by the quiet histories of the constituent elements. These sculptures are made of things which used to be other things; things which inhabited the world in different ways, with different functions or other decorative purposes. Yet what is most notable is the sense which these sculptural moments convey. They make sense as formal sculptures and as things in the world, even though how they achieve this is not obvious. And despite them not being surrealist in nature, or sentiment, there is a continuity between the sculptures and the quote from Lautréamont - favoured by André Breton - concerning the chance meeting "between an umbrella and a sewing-machine upon a dissecting-table." It is difficult to ascribe meaning to such a description but with its incongruities of objects, its unsettling logic is palpable. Similarly Blöndal's accumulations have sense: a poetics which melds form and history but one which is irreducible by language. As much as we try to overlay narrative and metaphor upon these sculptural arrangements, it is as though the work welcomes them but then effortlessly shrugs them off.

But the object constellations are not the only inhabitants of the gallery. They are accompanied by framed drawings. Which are, obviously, objects too, material facts of another sort within the world. They relate to the sculptures, and are just as quixotic, but in a different way. They are more organic, literally so, as they are composed of a figure or form with a surrounding halo of olive oil. This subtle tonal shift of the paper colour holds the image on the page in a cellular or embryonic space. Yet like the objects, the drawings tease at the possibility of reference, shifting between representation and abstraction, yet never exactly being one or the other. This can, to some degree, be explained by Blöndal's working method, where she starts each drawing by looking at an image - most often on the computer screen - yet during this process her focus becomes increasingly intent and singular. The thing which is being looked at ceases to appear as it is to her. The very act of looking shifts its sense and abstracts it from the world.

Margrét H. Blöndal's work is uncanny, it pulls sense and concentrates the familiar. The world is gently nudged not to make it allegorical but to expose and propose something which is perhaps like listening to a song in a language you don't understand. Or perhaps it is nothing like this at all.

Gavin Morrison

Margrét H. Blöndal (born in 1970) lives in Reykjavik, Iceland. She studied at the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts and completed her studies at Rutgers University New Jersey, USA. Solo exhibitions have been held at i8 Gallery, Reykjavik (with Silvia Bächli), at Nicolas Krupp, Basel and at the Municipal Museum of Reykjavik. She has been included in numerous group exhibitions in such spaces as Kunsthalle Wien, the National Gallery of Iceland and her work has been shown at Manifesta 7.

Galerie Thomas Fischer

Potsdamer Str. 77-87, Haus H  
10785 Berlin +49 30 74 78 03 85  
mail@galeriethomasfischer.de