

Jenny Brosinski

In my cloud (NO birds)

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Almine Rech Brussels is pleased to present 'In my cloud (NO birds)', Jenny Brosinski's third solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from June 12 to July 26, 2025.

In 'In my cloud (NO birds)', Jenny Brosinski brings together painting and sculpture to form a cosmos in which materials and colors—surrounded by empty space—reveal their pure presence. What does it look like in the artist's clouds, and what does the absence of birds suggest? What happens when something is not there, and how do you deal with emptiness? Brosinski approaches these questions in her signature style: dirty minimalism. Her work is reduced yet expressive, minimal but blooming with human gesture—always with a certain rawness. The clouds, or rather the air, become fluidly perceptible. There is no overload; instead, the focus is on painting that goes straight to the core. It's about the essence of existence, which can also accommodate absence.

But first, let's get specific: most of the sculptures are made from pine wood harvested in the artist's garden. These are hefty, sawed-off trunks, their surfaces frayed, where natural brown tones run like the last flickering flames. Lines and triangles suggest mouths and pointed teeth—monsters, dragons, or dinosaurs hiding beneath the bark. Here, Brosinski's figurative, fairy-tale sensibility comes into play. These are creatures that hover between abstract sculpture and half-remembered childhood companions.

The roughness of the wood also introduces a metaphysical dimension. It evokes themes of death, transience, becoming, growth, and decay. Wood is a new material for Brosinski, who previously carved in stone or cast in bronze. It's less enduring, but more familiar—marked by growth rings and a tactile vulnerability.

The only stone sculpture in the exhibition is more concrete, especially in the design of the mouth, which leans toward figuration. This gives it the quality of a monument—something that endures—recalling the ephemeral wooden beings nearby. Squares etched into its surface guide the eye toward the paintings on the walls, linking the two bodies of work.

Brosinski's visual vocabulary consists of lines, spots, scribbles, and gestural marks. These are the building blocks from which she composes an aesthetic grammar. What may appear spontaneous is in fact the result of deliberate choices. In *fly from what not serves you*, the action is concentrated in the lower part of the canvas. A fireplace-red organism bursts upward into hopeful white sugar mountains, drifting left into the dark shadows of the past. A glowing "P" shifts the perspective, reminding us that we're looking at a green line and a red arc—and that the illusion is built from nothing more than color and marks.

Whether *Red Horse* actually depicts a red horse, or whether the abstraction simply distills the dynamism of a horse—as if steaming—depends on the viewer, and on how willing they are to dive into the cold, amorphous water.

A new development in Brosinski's practice is her use of dark linen. Until now, she worked on lighter cotton fabrics that reflected a cooler, more contemporary aesthetic. The darker linen, by contrast, is rooted in art history. Joan Miró painted his playful forms on it, as did Jackson Pollock in his drip paintings. The brownish background is closely associated with the 20th century, which is why Brosinski had always avoided it. Now, she has found that—especially in combination with wood—it creates a strong link to nature. It opens up a sense of depth, allowing her palette of yellow, white, and pink to take on new dramatic effect, while still grounded in her dirty minimalist style.

'In my cloud (NO birds)' refers, in part, to Miró's *Cloud and Birds*—a light, floating abstraction on dark linen. But today, "cloud" also brings to mind the digital storage of our lives, along with the growing anxiety of losing space and memories.

The cloud, like the many empty spaces in Brosinski's paintings and in the exhibition itself, points to a recurring theme in her work: emptiness. In the Western world, emptiness is often pathologized—linked to depression and treated with medication or distraction. At the same time, self-fulfillment is promoted as the ultimate goal of capitalist society. In Buddhist thought, the opposite is true. Emptiness is seen as a meditative ideal, a state that frees the mind from pain, worry, and suffering. And in this contradiction lies a more difficult but deeper truth.

For Brosinski, emptiness also plays a central role in her painting process. "I am constantly confronted with how I endure emptiness, in my painting as well as in life." But loneliness and emptiness repeatedly become sources of energy for her—and that energy is present in the work. From these consciously used voids, color and form emerge like warm geysers—charged, vital, alive.

— Larissa Kikol, independent art critic, art historian, and author