

Jenny Brosinski Monkey Mind

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Monkey Mind

Almine Rech is pleased to present German artist Jenny Brosinski's first solo exhibition in London. The exhibition shows both two and three-dimensional works, emphasising the alternation between painting and sculpture. At first glance, Brosinski's world conveys a close kinship between the opposite poles of abstract and figurative art.

Her work can be understood as 'dirty minimalism' or 'cool expressionism'. 'Riotous conceptual painting' also fits. They are abstract worlds that reflect each painterly gesture and decision in an honest way, undisguised. The animals and monsters have sacrificed themselves; they step out of the painting and become sculptures. Something happens when the characters are extracted from the frame: the red sled heading toward an unknown destination the black imposes on the baby blue.

The 'Yeti', the unicorn, the sparrow, and the dolphin have all moved out, leaving the painting to its own devices as an abstract painting. Colours and shapes awaken, they laugh, they push and sway, they fight. Every picture is a sort of crime scene, it happens when the painting is left alone.

In *then I let it go*, the show of strength becomes quite clear. Black spreads out along the right half of the picture, slow and determined, with a certain depth and will. In the middle of the light blue spot, already slightly pushed to the left.

The aforementioned sleigh ride takes place in *headless down the mountain (until there's nothing left)*. The colour leaves the picture in the next second, the painting is a snapshot of the climax. Similar to sports photography, it takes a moment and a certain knowledge to understand how the action is unfolding.

Her work always questions itself, and every painting is a new attempt at an answer. How much black does she still need? How far can she go towards figuration? Where is the need for open space, for compression?

Brosinski works on several canvases in parallel in her studio. Repetition is both a tool and a theme. The pictures grow into a group, but can also stand by themselves. All decisions, even ones that seem light and careless, develop from a dialogue. Her painting arises from an inner state of tension, and in this way, it becomes powerful, sometimes loud and shrill.

Art historically, there is a proximity with neo-expressionism and minimalism, translated with a contemporary coolness. She pushes forward calmly – not coldly – with doodle and pop elements. You might think of Jean-Michel Basquiat, or of the abstract stain and line-blurring found in Albert Oehlen's finger painting. This creates friction, and this friction eventually creates heat. Her pictures are a testament to relationships, where colour and shapes meet and become closely connected.

I came with good intentions. Is it the artist or the image that speaks here? A large red circle, slightly crooked and dented, stands out. On the right, the colour seems to have run out, it may have merged into the red line drawings on the right half of the picture. Black lines done in charcoal connect and cross each other. A light blue shadow in the background hints at a form floating above in the air, not visible in the picture. The red marks leave traces.

The materiality of the sculptures unabashedly retains traces of the artist's work. Thus, the limestone acts as an archive for the carving itself. The dolphin is covered in small grooves, its stomach contents appear firm and heavy. At the same time, the bright colours give it back some lightness. The sparrow seems to live contentedly in a plump, dented ceramic body – he waits comfortably to see what will happen next.

Yeti was first moulded in clay. The bronze sculpture which stands over 3m tall, still carries wild notches and scratches that were inflicted during its creation. They become tousled, prickly fur. The Yeti seems unaware of his condition: perhaps he thinks he is a cactus, dutifully holding up his arm. There is a Travolta-esque swing in his hips. His mouth betrays how amazed he is at all of this.

Of course, there is also something playful about the works. To erect a larger than life 'Yeti' sculpture as a memorial translates the child's imagination into a superlative. The scribbling gives a childlike quality to the works. In fact, it results in a visual language that is not so easy to read. If you dedicate yourself to it, almost contemplatively, the independent life of the colours and lines becomes all the more striking; the seriousness comes to the fore, just like a play. The merry-go-round of thoughts mustn't spin too fast.

Monkey Mind, the title of the exhibition, is also a concept in Buddhism. Shut down, concentrate, let go, but stay focused. Nowadays this is a huge challenge, since we consume images faster and faster. In this way, *Monkey Mind* invites you to relax. This is the best way to encounter the works of Jenny Brosinski. Let yourself be guided by them, from colour to form to line to crying unicorn, and finally back to the cool, casual brushstrokes.

— Larissa Kikol, art critic and art historian