

Benedikte Bjerre

Vault

The dire inequality of Western contemporary life—cooked to a swirling speed on gas, sugar, and coffee, demanding ever more futuristic, transitory living conditions, delivered 24/7 by exhausted bodies—sits at the core of Danish artist Benedikte Bjerre’s (b. 1987) practice. Whether washing machines, diapers from newborns, coffee makers, human-scaled transport cases, or helium balloon chickens, her works build on our most recognizable everyday objects. With a cunning and witty touch, she pinpoints the absurdities of our societal circulations and infrastructure.

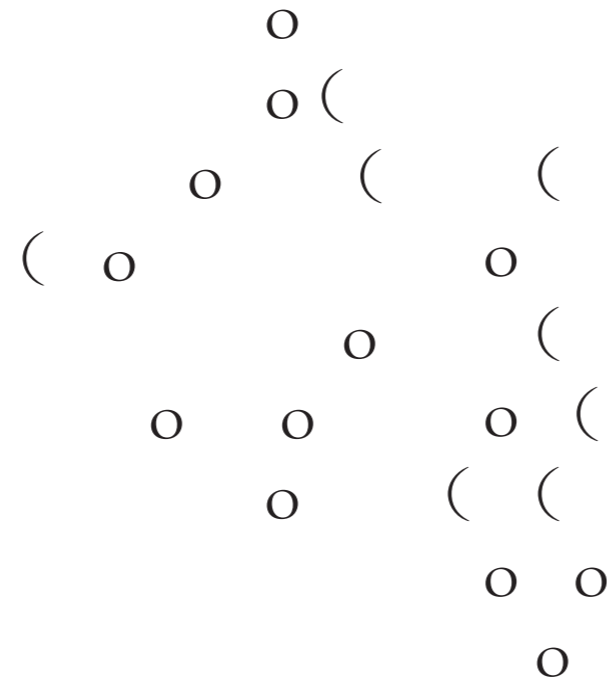
At O—Overgaden, for Bjerre’s first grand-scale institutional solo show in her native Denmark, a new piece, *Day to Day*, takes center stage. Six monumental human-sized silvery containers—shaped like arches cut in the middle almost like two halves of a brain or human lungs—are placed, serially, in the central nave of the exhibition space. The pieces are modeled on FedEx air cargo containers, produced to fit the main body of an airplane and maximize transport space, thus assuring the delivery of selected items to you from anywhere on the globe within hours or, as the title indicates, from *Day to Day*. Installed in Christianshavn, an old shipping harbor of Copenhagen, the mirrored blank aluminum bodies of the containers—entirely enclosed by industrial rivets and serene in their sequential, almost ceremonial placement—force the visitor to move around or squeeze between them. Minimal and sealed, the monolithic vaults thus physically indicate the commercial logic of access for some and inaccessibility for the many when it comes to entering the space odyssey of our contemporary condition: who can and cannot benefit from its sci-fi portals of today’s overnight delivery?

Alongside *Day to Day*, Bjerre presents *Starry Night*, a series of bronzes cast from slices of Lidl bread that themselves have been baked (in the molding process). Visually, the golden “baked” surface of the bronzes comes eerily close to the surface of the original loaves. As unique pieces modeled on the most basic nourishment one can find, yet created in the expensive metal, bronze, the works emphasize the capitalist reality of our everyday grind: bread on the table comes only if you pay up. Whether using bronze or your Mastercard, bread is only there if you can muster an economy, as we all know.

The title, *Starry Night*, is borrowed from Van Gogh’s infamously expensive blockbuster painting which connects the circulation of fundamental and super cheap bread to how the modernist painting is today circulated in unfathomable variations as poster art. Meanwhile the title also points out the opposite logic: how the cheap, mass-distributed loaves are reincarnated in Bjerre’s hands as expensive singular artworks while Van Gogh’s unaffordable singular piece has been redistributed across the world in endless, cheap copies.

At O—Overgaden the bronze loaves are stuck on the walls and ceiling of the terrazzo-tiled exhibition space—which is in fact a former canteen feeding the factory workers at the B&W engine production facility, one of Copenhagen’s legendary industrial era factories. In the space at O—Overgaden, it looks as if a centrifugal power has propelled the realistic bread remakes onto the building. Hence the *Starry Night* bronze series nods to Van Gogh and transforms the interior of the institutional “vault” (both as a sky and a shrine) inverting O—Overgaden’s arched and paneled architecture for it to become Bjerre’s canvas.

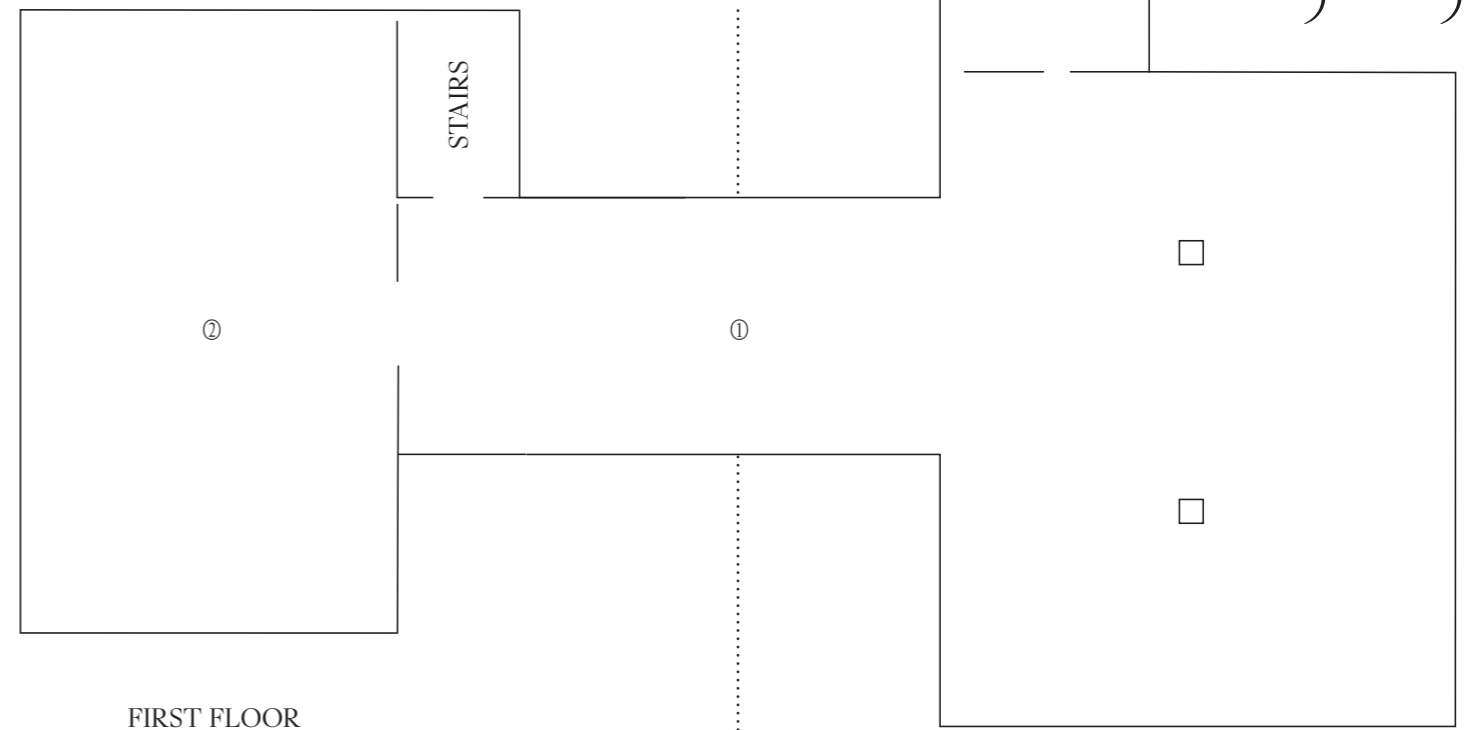
The exhibition, titled *Vault*—repeat it aloud and it phonetically sounds like the DK delivery service “Wolt”—underscores what we already know: we are living in a dystopic sci-fi-like reality where cheap bread provides stellar lifelines for some, while the 24-hour air freight industry beams gourmet butter to others.



Exhibition supported by:



18 February – 30 April 2023



FIRST FLOOR

① *Day to Day*, 2025

Aluminum, pop rivets

6 parts, each: 200.5 x 151 x 201 cm

Installation size variable

Installation size at O—Overgaden

200.5 x 377 x 811 cm

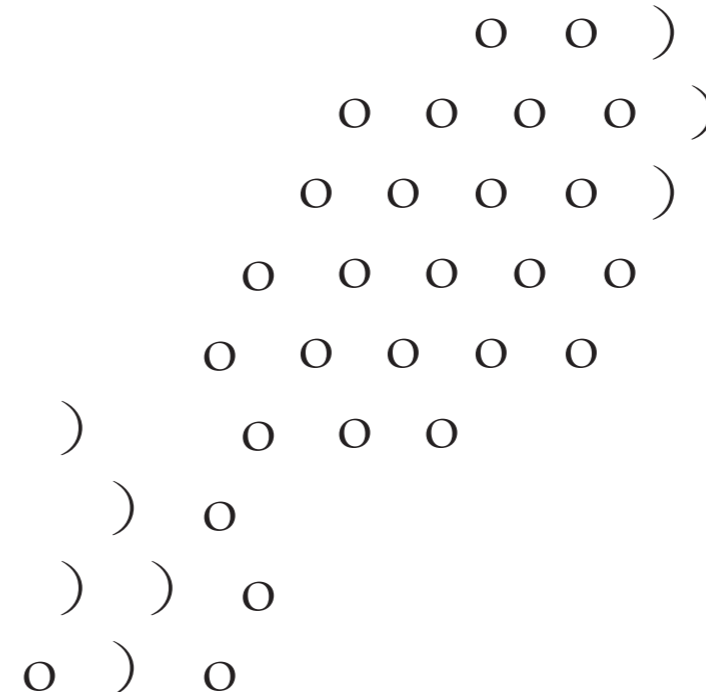
② *Starry Night*, 2025

Direct bronze casts of bread

32 parts

Each approx. 1 x 10 x 15 cm

Installation size variable



Benedikte Bjerre (b. 1987, Copenhagen) is a graduate of the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main (2015) and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (2016). In addition, she holds a BA in sociology from the University of Copenhagen (2009). Her work has been shown in group exhibitions at venues including Kunstverein Göttingen (2021), SMK The National Gallery of Denmark (2020), ARKEN Museum for Modern Art (2019), and De Ateliers (2018).

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O—OVERGADEN