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Sóley Ragnarsdóttir: *Organizing Principles*

SÓLEY RAGNARSDÓTTIR

Organizing Principles

6 November – 31 December 2021

[O—Overgaden](#)

Vernissage: 5 November, 5–10pm

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Sóley Ragnarsdóttir's first institutional solo exhibition, *Organizing Principles*, weaves itself through the first floor of O—Overgaden as a hyper-ornamented artistic universe in which acrylic and epoxy intermingle with amber, seashells, and ocean-sharpened glass pieces on large, freestanding paintings and neatly decorated napkin pieces. The walls are covered in patterned wallpaper, and eyes made from the same materials as boats and surfboards hang from the ceiling in fishing ropes in front of amber-toned windows.

When the Covid-19 crisis disrupted the world, Ragnarsdóttir moved to Thy in Northern Jutland. This new life among amber hunters, fishermen, and surfers clearly influenced the artist's unique, visual voice as well as the conceptual layers of the exhibition. Through Ragnarsdóttir's eyes we see life by the sea as a poetic fable. "The ocean ties it all together: to the fishermen, the ocean is a workplace and to the surfers, it is a playground," says Ragnarsdóttir, who uses decorative elements to investigate how we deal with the nature surrounding us.

The exhibition points at a tendency to organize life in boxes; the city and the human as opposites to the natural world. Ragnarsdóttir offers us a different—less organized and more sensuous—way of being in the world, and with *Organizing Principles* she directs our gaze towards the life-giving symbioses that can occur when otherwise differentiated materials, stories, and worlds meet.

Ragnarsdóttir's sculptural approach to painting allows for the exhibition's pictorial language to move from the canvas out to all the elements in the space. In this way the artist creates a fascinating aestheticized world flirting with kitsch and bearing traces of the Arts & Crafts traditions of handicraft, as well as of the artist's Icelandic origins. The decorative traditions of handicraft have long been positioned as an opposite to the elevated fine arts, but Ragnarsdóttir shakes things up and focuses our attention on the artistic value of the decorative as something also entitled to take up space in the scope of contemporary art.

"With a fine-tuned sense for the encounters of contrasting materials, the hypnotic effect of ornament's repetition, and the psychological as well as mythological significance of both color and symbols, Ragnarsdóttir creates an eclectic and seductive visual universe that overwhelms us with

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its immense degree of detail. The assembled expression is quite fierce,” says Aukje Lepoutre Ravn, Interim Director at O—Overgaden.

The exhibition has been supported by Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond, The Danish Arts Foundation, Knud Højgaard’s Fond, 15. Juni Fonden, Beckett Fonden and the Copenhagen Visual Arts Council.

Sóley Ragnarsdóttir (b. 1991, DK/IS) lives and works in Thy, Northern Jutland. She holds an MFA from Städelschule, Frankfurt, Germany (2014–19) and has exhibited at Städel Museum (Frankfurt), Historisches Museum (Frankfurt), Jean Claude Maier (Frankfurt), and Kunstforum (Darmstadt) among other places.

Artist from O—Overgaden’s *INTRO* program

With the exhibitions *No History at All* by Dina El Kaisy Friemuth and *Organizing Principles* by Sóley Ragnarsdóttir, O—Overgaden highlights two rising artistic practices of an international standard.

O—Overgaden’s most important task is to make space for new voices on the Danish art scene. The *INTRO* program, O—Overgaden’s tailored development program for young artists in Denmark, makes it possible to collaborate with selected young artistic voices throughout a full year prior to their solo exhibition and to investigate what a best practice model for supporting the artistic growth segment can look like. The program selects two artists each year based on an open call and culminates in large-scale solo exhibitions with accompanying publications.

INTRO is a three-year pilot project supported by Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond. Dina El Kaisy Friemuth and Sóley Ragnarsdóttir’s exhibitions are the third and fourth in a series of six. The next deadline for the *INTRO* program is 1 November 2021. [Read more about *INTRO* at Overgaden’s website.](#)

For further information, interviews, and press images please contact Head of Press Line Brædder at lb@overgaden.org or 0045 2782 3929.