

Cecilie Norgaard

*Emotionally
Invested*



96

102

95

97

(O-O) OVER
O O O O

ISBN: 978-87-94311-26-7
EAN 9788794311267

Cecilie Norgaard
Emotionally Invested
Exhibition period: 22.02.2025 – 04.05.2025

O-OVERGADEN
Overgaden nedен Vundet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

INTRODUCTION

It is a great pleasure to introduce this publication as a companion to Cecilie Norgaard's solo exhibition *Emotionally Invested* at O—Overgaden. Since 2021, O—Overgaden has, with the generous support of the Augustinus Foundation, published a monographic series in conjunction with our large-scale solo exhibitions, aiming to expand the conversations around each show and produce new, offspring material.

In this particular case, Curator at Den Frie Magnus Thorø has contributed an essay on Norgaard's pictorial language, while German art historian and writer Sophia Rohwetter has contributed reflections on the many layers of the practice. A warm and heartfelt thank you to both contributors. Moreover, I wish to thank the whole team at O—Overgaden for their efforts in realizing the exhibition, as well as the graphic design team at fanfare for their always dedicated work, and of course not least the artist, Cecilie, for generously sharing conceptualizations and co-thinking with all of us, through both the exhibition and this very publication.

In densely layered, colorful canvases, Cecilie Norgaard's conceptual oil paintings humorously tease out the hierarchical highs and lows produced by contemporary society. If oil painting was once a cultural cornerstone in glorifying the upper class, in Norgaard's new painting series, produced for O—Overgaden, she insists on flipping this narrative, instead focusing on mundane, everyday objects. Colored pencils, numbers, and letters; piggy banks, cars, clocks and trucks crash, repeat, or multiply in the paintings, collectively creating a tongue-in-cheek, absurdist universe mixing school tools with money and protestant (time) pressure.

Part of a circular alphabet, each of Norgaard's individual motifs—also including workers, city architecture, and schematic indexes— becomes a parcel in a wider ensemble of recirculated figures, bleeding from one painting into another. The motifs are centrally placed and stage-lit on darkened backgrounds, as scenes suspended from context, at times surrounded by a generic, renaissance-like landscape.

These paintings engage in a critical dialogue with the history of painting, pointing to their own presence within the logic and economy of art. For example, one piece shows a clockface resembling a painter's palette, on which miniature workers are at work—an image reflecting questions of time and (artistic) labor. In another piece, a dot-to-dot puzzle overlays the oil painting's depiction of a traffic accident; a crash that sends multicolored cars flying, like flashes of color samples. In this way, the motif—here, the cars—points directly to itself as color and to the painting's own creation process. Thus, the works do not merely depict vehicles and transport; they are also, in themselves, transported or in transformation—always on their way to becoming something else.

Jointly, the images seem to form an inventory of middle- or working-class baseline tools turned primary painterly, aesthetic objects. In one painting, haulage trucks and shipping containers—key to European cargo trade—are rendered as monochrome rectangles. This highlights, on the one hand, the painting's own function as a portable commodity, while at the same time transforming these aesthetically outcast shipping surfaces to something akin to early modernist block-colored abstractions.

In the midst of this prompt to create new surfaces for and understandings of where art or aesthetic experiences occur, there is something unsettling about Norgaard's inescapable and circular world of images. The works combine playfulness and sobriety, with the paintings eagerly accelerating, building up, and growing, while their content withers, fades, and collides. When the cute piggy bank is broken, it simply reveals another broken piggy bank.

Rhea Dall,
Director and Chief Curator, O—Overgaden
February 2025

Cecilie Norgaard (b. 1991, DK) is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2021) and lives and works in Vienna and Berlin. She has previously exhibited at venues including Rinde am Rhein, Düsseldorf (2024); Matteo Cantarella, Copenhagen (2024); Den Frie, Copenhagen (2022); and mumok, Vienna (2022). The exhibition at O—Overgaden is Norgaard's first institutional solo show.

MOVING LANGUAGE, TRANSPORTING PAINTING

Sophia Rohwetter

MARGUERITE'S LORRY, CECILIE'S TRUCKS

It begins on the national road in Pontchartrain, France. The camera arrives at a square. The truck is parked here. Brand: Saviem. Weight: 52 tons. Color: Blue. The engine is not running.

A traffic circle in the industrial area of Plaisir. Monotonous surroundings. Caravans. In the distance, a high-rise district, stacked deadly tenements. There stands the truck, its engine pointed at the viewer. It slowly starts driving towards the viewer, then turns left. It drives across the screen. It disappears, then reappears at a traffic circle. Disappears again. An empty intersection. The film has begun.

Sideways tracking shot. Building sites. Excavated earth. Corrugated iron huts. Then trees. Marguerite Duras's voice off-screen.

It would have been on a road by the seashore. She would have crossed a great bare plateau. And then a truck would have come. It would have passed slowly across the landscape. White sky, winter. A mist too, a light one, sitting all over the fields, on the ground.

Silence, then music (Beethoven's Variations 29, 30, 31).

A dark room, the curtains drawn, daylight filtering through. Marguerite Duras and a young Gérard Depardieu sit across from each other at a round table, reading the film's manuscript.

Gérard Depardieu: Is this a film?

Marguerite Duras: It would have been a film. It is a film, yes.¹

1. Gérard Depardieu: *C'est un film?* Marguerite Duras: *Ça aurait été un film. C'est un film, oui.*

Marguerite Duras's film *Le Camion* (The Lorry) (1977) is written in the conditionnel passé. It is a film that would have been, and still is—a past unreal, a realized impossibility, *irrealis mood*. In it, a blue truck rides along shifting landscapes, sometimes rural, sometimes suburban, both memorable and interchangeable. Elsewhere and inside, in the *chambre noire*, Duras and Depardieu read the manuscript of a film—that would have been. This film would have told the story of a classless woman (*la dame, déclassée*) hitchhiking with a truck driver, perhaps a member of the Communist Party. She, however, considers any revolution impossible. Neither the woman, the driver, nor the revolution ever appears in the film—only the blue truck, the road, the landscape. The truck would have disappeared and then reappeared. “You see?,” Duras asks Depardieu—perhaps the viewer—and we begin to see the truck as it drives, carries, and contains everything that is being said. The truck moves on words; language drives the images.

Duras's *Lorry* plays on the double game of “a film within a film” and the Godardian way of not making a film while making one. Essentially, then, *Le Camion* is a film about filmmaking—or rather, and as Duras put it herself, about cinema not knowing that the production process of a film is itself the film.

The truck is a recurring motif in the paintings of Cecilie Norgaard. This exhibition, like Duras's film, features a blue truck—or rather, four of them—arranged sideways and stacked vertically in a single painting. The blue trucks, along with some truck-less trailers, carry loads of color blocks in various shades of blue, red, yellow, green, purple, orange, and white. Perhaps these are miniature children's trucks transporting building blocks in primary and secondary colors to an imaginary construction site, or maybe it is an on-time delivery of compositional elements on the way to a color field painting.

If in *The Lorry*, the blue truck is a *porteur du récit, de tout l'écrit* (the carrier of the story, of all writing), Cecilie's truck is a carrier of color, itself carried by color, supplying the painting with its own material. The story carried by the truck, then, is one of the actual production of painting, which is itself the painting.

However, this story is not told without words, without writing. The painting's title—*Small Medium Large*, perhaps referring to the varying sizes of the trucks' color-loaded trailers that move horizontally across the painting as if to measure its width—is spelled out within the painting in three-dimensional block letters. These appear to fall, some rotating, others mirror-inverted, from the top to the bottom of the canvas, as if measuring its length. The falling letters, painted in dirty white or tinged with lightened green and orange, slide in front of or behind the truck-carried blocks, at times blending in with their colors. As the words—small, medium, large—fall and fragment, new anagrammatic relations emerge, conjuring the daily business of making and selling art: galleries, dealers, desire, dreams, emails.

TRANSITIVE PAINTING

Cecilie's cargo truck moves along and through both the symbolic and material networks of production and distribution of painting. These networks, “in their incomprehensible scale ranging from the impossibly small microchip to the impossibly vast global Internet,” or from the impossibly small color cargo load to the vast impossibility of desire, truly embody, as David Joselit writes in “Painting beside Itself”, the contemporary sublime. When painting, as a medium closely tied to the history of bourgeois taste and the commodification of art, enters into a network, it risks reification and, thus, the halt of its movement: “it is halted, paid for, put on a wall, or sent to storage, thereby permanently crystallizing a particular social relation.” Against this permanent arrest of an object's circulation within a network, Joselit argues for what he terms “transitive painting,” a form of painting demonstrating “that once an object enters a network, it can never be fully stilled, but only subjected to different material states and speeds of circulation, ranging from the geologically slow (cold storage) to the infinitely fast.”²

In another truck painting, it is not letters, but cars that are falling. A nocturnal scene, a mountain landscape. A truck with a trailer carrying cars in different colors—orange, green, red, yellow, blue, white—goes off the road, drives over the guardrail, about to crash into a river. The cars tumble down, in all directions: the orange one bounces, hood-first, into the water; the yellow one falls off backwards; the white one crashes into the other guardrail. The cars' saturated colors glow, flashing like stars in the night. These are cars, but as the painting reminds the viewer, they are nothing but color on canvas, like the color blocks carried by the blue truck. In another iteration of the same subject, the falling color cars have turned into mere brushstrokes, fast and fleeting, suggesting speedy brushwork. The medium-reflexive reference to the painting's materiality and making continues in a paint-by-numbers diagram overlaying the first crash scene. The white dots, spread like stars across the painting—only some with numbers attached, ranging from 3 to 149—call the viewer to connect the dots, to form a network of lines, to draw an image within the image.

Norgaard's paintings circulate within the small, medium-sized, and larger networks of art while building their own structures and networks, within which objects—trucks, cars, words, letters, numbers, color blocks, and art supplies like pencils and palettes—enter and never stand still, but are continuously subjected to different material and symbolic states: from truck to car to color block to brushstroke; from word to letter salad to anagram to diagram. Her transitive paintings never arrest movement; they only stop to give someone or something a lift.

2. David Joselit, “Painting beside Itself”, *October*, vol.130 (Fall 2009), pp.125–34.

METONYMIC MOVEMENTS

Like the truck in Duras's film, in Norgaard's network of paintings, certain images, objects, or compositional elements appear, disappear, and reappear, often as something else or in new company. A car falls off the truck as color; a pencil enters the painting and leaves as an artist; a globe appears behind a window and turns into a piggy bank. A previous painting, *Under the Weather* (2024), shows a pile of weirdly weightless globes, some stacked, others toppled, behind a window divided by dark grid lines. Behind the globes, white curtains open to a European cityscape. The painting *Luck, Fertility, Prosperity*, on view in this exhibition, shows the same scene, only the heap of globes has turned into an unsteady, seemingly collapsing pile of pink piggy banks. The piggy bank reappears in other paintings. In one, a horde of them builds the background of crashed cars surrounded by floating pencils, letters and numbers; in another, a blue piggy bank is crushed not to reveal savings but another, equally crushed and robbed pink piggy bank—a pig in a pig, or as the title suggests, “a pic in a pic,” an image within the image. In the background, a colorful bar chart suggests financial movement, but like the dot-to-dot diagram, the infographic withholds meaning.

“Diagrams are great because you can put everything in them,” Amy Sillman writes in *Notes on Diagrams*. Like the piggy bank, the truck, or the car, the diagram, then, is a kind of container, “a come-one-come-all structure” for representing “the polymorphous connectivity between discrete elements.”³

In a way, the discrete elements within the networks, diagrams or containers of Norgaard's paintings—the truck, the car, the globe, the piggy bank, the pencil, the letter, the numbers, the colors—function like signifiers within a metonymic structure. In linguistics, metonymy describes a figure of speech in which a word denoting one thing is used to refer to a related thing, based on some understood association or contiguity, often, as in synecdoche, naming a part to refer to the whole (for example, “wheels” for “automobile”). In Norgaard's paintings, all things seem to refer, in the end, to painting: a truck is a car is a container is a globe is a piggy bank is money is time is a pencil is color is painting.

It is in the “word-to-word” connection that metonymy is based, Jacques Lacan writes in “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious.”⁴ In Lacanian psychoanalysis, metonymy concerns the ways in which signifiers can be linked in a signifying chain,

3. Amy Sillman, “Notes on Diagrams,” in *Faux Pas: Selected Writings and Drawings* (Paris: After 8 Books, 2020), pp.127–37.

4. Jacques Lacan, “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud”, in *Écrits* (New York: Norton, 2006), p.421.

where one signifier constantly refers to another in a perpetual deferral or displacement of meaning. Desire, then, which is always “desire for something else,” follows the same metonymic logic of displacement: as soon as the object of desire is attained, it is no longer desirable, and the subject’s desire shifts to another object. Similarly, perhaps, Norgaard’s paintings move from one object of desire to another, continuously substituting one thing for another.

THE TRUCK, AGAIN

In an earlier truck painting, titled *mr-truck-big-journey* (2025), not on view in this exhibition, a white truck appears in a painting within a painting. The painting depicts a bourgeois living room with a couch, an armchair, a floor lamp without a lightbulb, and a sideboard with two vases on top, both without flowers. Empty containers, perhaps like the truck itself. On the mustard-yellow wall above the couch hangs a large painting of a moving truck at night. The cargo class moving inside the bourgeois home. The truck image within the image appears to be illuminated only by the white scattered light of the truck’s headlights and the warm light of the streetlamps, whose poles vanish into the darkness, hovering in the sky like windows or white, primed canvases. Green patches of color lie like mist over the sky, the road, and the truck’s body. The painting carries the painting of a truck, while the truck seems to move the paint. You see?

In another truck painting of the same series, the relation between outside (the truck on the street at night) and inside (the bourgeois interior) is reversed. Here, it is not the wall of an interior space carrying the painting of a truck, but trucks transporting paintings. Some of these paintings within the paintings depict dark deserted interior spaces—study and conference rooms furnished with tables and chairs, a restaurant, an art gallery—lit up only by turquoise light radiating from computer screens and globes. But there is no one studying, serving food, looking at art or the world, and there is, like in Duras’s film, no one driving the truck that carries the painting. The driver’s cab is always empty or too dark to see inside.

Most of Norgaard’s paintings are devoid of humans, but not of workers. In an earlier series of paintings there are flower workers, tiny but hard-working anthropomorphic daisies gazing into screens, stretching their bodies, bending over office chairs, or lining up to withdraw cash from cash machines. In this exhibition, the workers are pencils. Some seem to be jobless artist-workers gathering at an opening around a painting; others are clock workers with pencil hats moving time. In the painting *Attending the Summit*, the pencils have turned into ghostly orange figures with hats and ties and without faces. These are not funny pencils attending the opening nor workers attending the revolution.

Rather, these are faceless and spineless brushstrokes posing as businessmen. But, who knows, maybe one day a truck would have appeared, its driver perhaps a member of the Communist Party.

SYMBOLS GONE ASTRAY

Magnus Thorø

Piggy banks, cars, car transporters, highways, crayons, business men, diagrams, numbers, letters, and star maps. The concrete and recognizable motifs in Cecilie Norgaard’s paintings are all picked out from our messy present, from common everyday experiences and childhood universes. But despite the tangibility of the motifs, they are also ambivalent, transitive, transformative, and constantly in the midst of becoming something else. A palette is not just a palette, it is also a piggy bank, and the tiny car driving across the palette transforms it into a highway. The fluidity of these paintings’ figuration resists language and its tendency of defining and limiting things; here, several conditions are always at play simultaneously. What happens when you toss objects together? What new affects occur? The palette-piggy-bank-highway is superimposed by colored parable-looking brushstrokes reaching a little rainbow at the top of the painting. It could be some kind of upturn or decline, society’s mapping of itself; or perhaps they are simply strokes, a kind of painterly abstraction.

In *Immergrün* (2025), a car accident is frozen in that split second when a car transporter crashes on the highway and numerous cars are flung to all sides. The primary-colored cars are also luminous stains of color—pink, yellow, blue, light blue—and they no longer appear like cars. Their shades seem to rub off on or melt into the surrounding highway landscape. The catastrophic event of a car accident becomes a color study in its own right, a representation of the mere act of painting as a catastrophic process. The absence of people in the cars downplays the impression of drama and turns the vehicle into a more autonomous participant.

Despite the motif’s connection to speed and chaos, the painting possesses a harmonic and contemplative atmosphere, far from action painting.

On another canvas (*Self, same*, 2025), a crashed blue car dissolves as a recognizable object, instead becoming an abstract machine or a deconstructed letter. The color and contour of the car leaks out into the surrounding landscape, and figure and ground become one abstract movement, a zone where the directions within the image also become relative. Consistently, the paintings are produced in a dry, pixelated, layered manner. Their backgrounds appear like indeterminate zones (empty roads, desolate mountain regions) but they are just as active and significant as the motifs they encompass, and by which they are dyed or contaminated. They point at themselves performatively, both as illusionistic spaces and as painted surfaces.

Piggy banks, associated with money and savings, illustrate the abstract idea of money by being a kind of mini bank for children. Concurrently with our contemporary tech world and its desire to become immaterial and automatized, piggy banks (and paintings?) may also possess a certain anachronism. They seem like relics from a near past in which money was still a material thing you could hold in your hand, with some weight and tactility. In Norgaard’s paintings, the piggy banks look out from the frames, establishing eye contact with the viewer. Their gazes are empty and questioning, and they are also quite cute as little (money) beings. In one of the paintings there is a partly shattered piggy bank, the surface of which is painted in delicate shades of green and blue, as if it were an ocean or a globe. Inside the broken object is another smaller version, also broken and perhaps hiding even smaller piggies in its belly; like a fictive economy where the money you thought was there is always somewhere else, or maybe does not exist anymore. *Luck Fertility Prosperity* (2025) shows a large number of piggy banks piling up behind a barred window in a gloomy, historic cityscape. It is impossible to decide whether it is a caricature of greed and prosperity, or whether some other story lies behind the situation. The pile of pigs has been partly painted over with broad, gesticulating strokes, creating a funny turbulence and a ghostly vividness that makes the painting hover between immaterial and concrete.

Just like the cute piggy banks, the crayons with faces and arms (*Public Art*, 2025) are also tied to the realm of childhood, suggesting possible coherences between painting, capitalism, naivety, and the school as a norm and formative institution. In several other paintings, back-to-school writing utensils, notebooks, and merchandise float around, while a small group of happy crayons, neatly arranged, almost in a shade order, holds up a painting (or a screen, perhaps a mirror). The doubling of pictorial space makes the work giddy. A purple crayon has a glass of champagne in its hand while two blue crayons are immersed in conversation, kind of like at an art opening, where seeing and being seen are strangely entangled.

But behind the figures, like a diffuse veil, the painting also shows a gray metropolis, with dark and illuminated windows beneath an abstract starry sky. It is like two synchronized zones of reality mystically existing side by side. The starry sky also finds its way into another painting, in the form of those children's dot-to-dot drawings where a hidden image appears when the dots are connected. Drawing from one dot to the next can be associated with the centuries-long human disposition to create images in the sky by connecting the stars. Both approaches are ways of inscribing figuration in the abstract, creating your own structure in formlessness. You identify, look for patterns, mirror yourself in recognizable symbols, and find out how they can be abstracted, no longer meaning something.

The absence of people in the paintings reinforces the model-like quality of the objects depicted and the indefinability of their scale, which is probably also a consequence of the blurry surroundings. On the other hand, the deserted atmosphere makes the painted objects appear as subjects with their own vigor and will. In a way, a crushed car is also a crushed subject, and Norgaard points out how "auto" literally means "self."¹ Besides the self-conscious objects, human-like beings also sometimes occur in a kind of transitional state between subjects and objects. In one of the paintings, six figures are dressed like crayons in colored suits and pointy pencil hats. Evidently, they are in the middle of fixing a large clock, all standing inside the clockface which is their worksite. As they are sweeping and adjusting the clock hands their clothes are emitting blue, red, yellow, and green shades to the surroundings, transforming the whiteish clock into an atmospheric pictorial field. The act of painting is connected to labor and time; it depends on, is created in, and is distributed through time. The figures do not exactly stop time, but they clarify its analogue nature as a machine moving forward and its dependency on outside energy, in contrast to the absence of time in 24/7 networks. The orange, suited men in *Attending the Summit* (2025) could be perceived as winners of the neoliberal working culture: little, successful businessmen or politicians (but also personifying the painting stroke itself), who radiate performativity and naivety. This symbolic order, too, is unstable; the men seem idle and irresolute, standing with their hands folded behind their backs in a hazy space of exploding green, blue, pink, purple, and yellow color which could be both a club or a slice of Claude Monet's waterlilies. Maybe they are not several people but the same businessman in different positions. Their clothing, hair, and bodies appear to blur out into the space and everything gradually dissolves into color—perhaps in the process of disappearing altogether.

In multiple ways, outer structures and power apparatuses are rendered visible, saying something about what it means to work and consume in our contemporary lives, and prompting the self-reflection: Which networks and resources are the paintings depending on?

1. Conversation with the artist, 2025.

The themes that coil through the pictures—transport, commodification, creativity, success (or lack thereof), abstract information, a world controlled by automation beyond our control—are not only general but also concrete questions for Norgaard's painting practice. They are folded into the efforts and doubt probably entailed in any precarious art production and turn into self-critical reflection on standardized spaces where artworks are shown. As Norgaard and her artist colleague Sanna Helena Berger wrote in the press release accompanying their show *Die Installierte Reale* in Düsseldorf last year:

Among our shared passions is a desire to reflect, to critique and demand from artworks that they be aware of themselves, their history and the hierarchies they might partake in, if not define. One way of performing such critique could be to demand the iconic, tradition-ridden artwork, be it painting or minimalist sculpture, to come down from its pedestal. A way to attempt such a demand could be by depicting the pedestal itself.

Although the paintings possess an element of anti-realism that circles around speculative tales and absurd situations, they also negotiate with a confused and occasionally dark, outer reality. Within the performative reshufflings within the works, where symbols mimic each other and seep out into their surroundings (or the surroundings within) to become color or texture, another sense of reality also arises. A mood of destruction is dissolved via infantile humor and an inherent disbelief towards something fundamentally constructive and curious.

Things that are never only themselves but also next to (or inside of) themselves, and mystic cloudy highways gradually becoming colored (and thus, more mystical)—these avoid the defining nature of language. When language appears in the paintings it is fragmented into its smallest components which can be put together in countless ways. This is the case on the large billboards by the entrance of some kind of mall ("*Quote*", 2025) where sentences have disintegrated and letters are lying heavy and mixed-up in the bottom of the frame. Perhaps they are not billboards after all, but weightless screens continuing beyond and above the building, ascending towards the sky. Lightness and friction meet in the paintings' model-like realities, as if in a futuristic film where everything is clearly demarcated yet diffuse because things do not behave as you would expect. They depict clashes between tangibility and ephemerality, contours and color shattered to pieces and coming together again—as the cars depicted as driving, hovering, crashing, sinking objects, alternately sketched up and rubbed out into frayed splotches of color. This sensibility towards the plasticity, changeability, and re-constructability of things makes Norgaard's paintings seem in constant motion despite their frozen time. A palette looks like a Monet-esque waterlily leaf, shaped like the undeveloped face of a fetus, and the car is parked where the brain would be, ready to drive off.

O—OVERGADEN
Overgaden neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

Cecilie Norgaard
Emotionally Invested
Exhibition period: 22.02.2025 – 04.05.2025

ISBN: 978-87-94311-26-7
EAN 9788794311267

Editor: Nanna Friis
Text: Rhea Dall, Sophia Rohwetter,
Magnus Thorø Clausen
Translation: Nanna Friis
Copy editing: Susannah Worth
Foto: David Stjernholm

This publication is funded by Augustinus Fonden

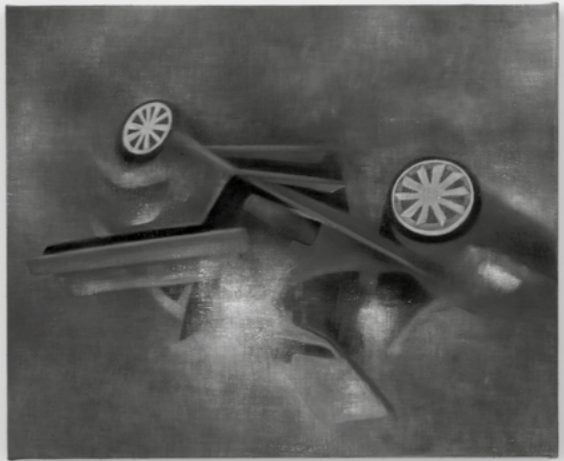
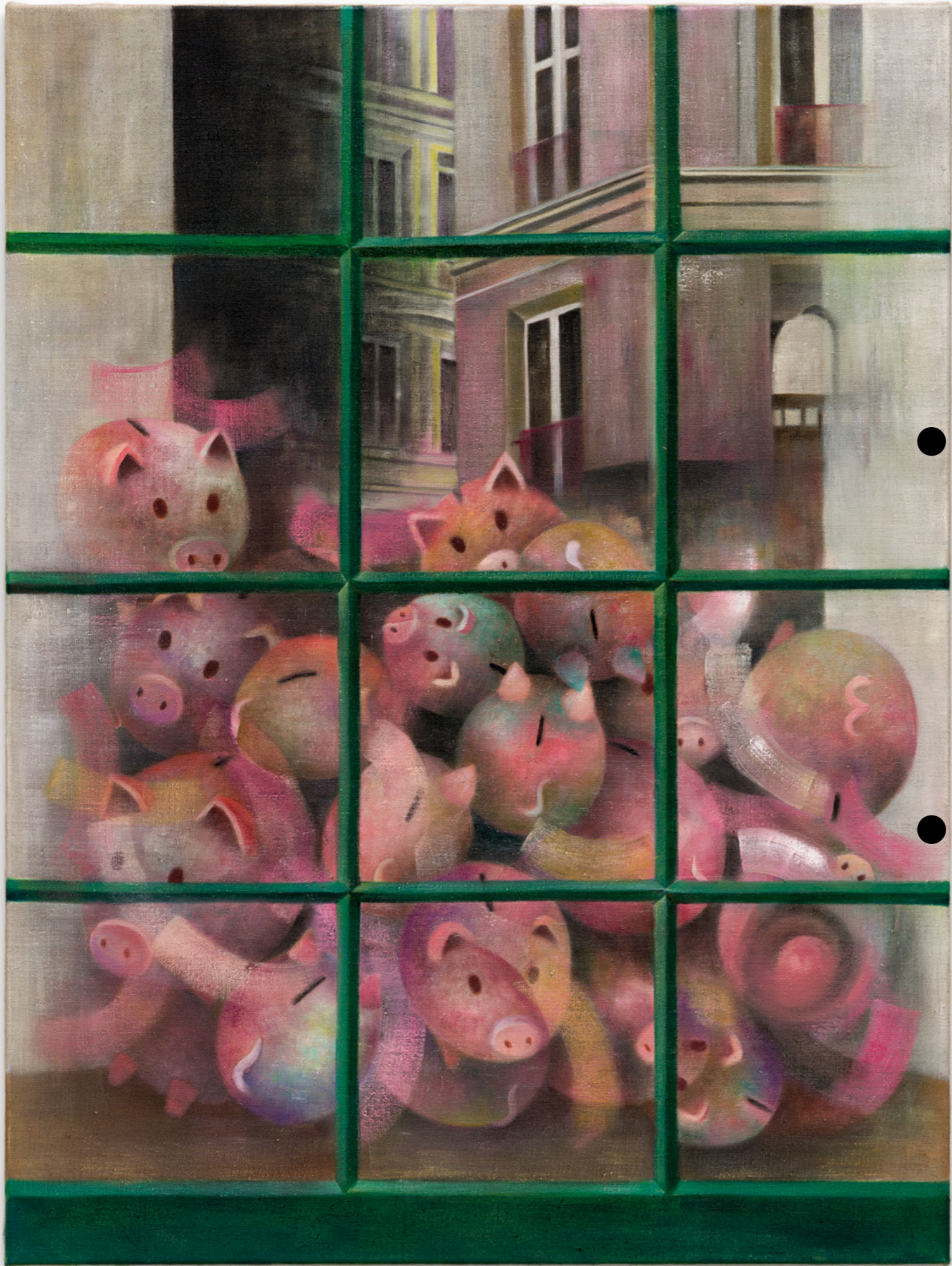
Cecilie Norgaard's exhibition has received support from
The Danish Arts Foundation
The Danish Arts Workshops
Den Hielmstjerne-Rosencroneke Stiftelse

Graphic design: fanfare
Typography: Glossy Magazine, Bold Decisions
Printed at: Raddraaier, Amsterdam

Printed in edition of 150 copies



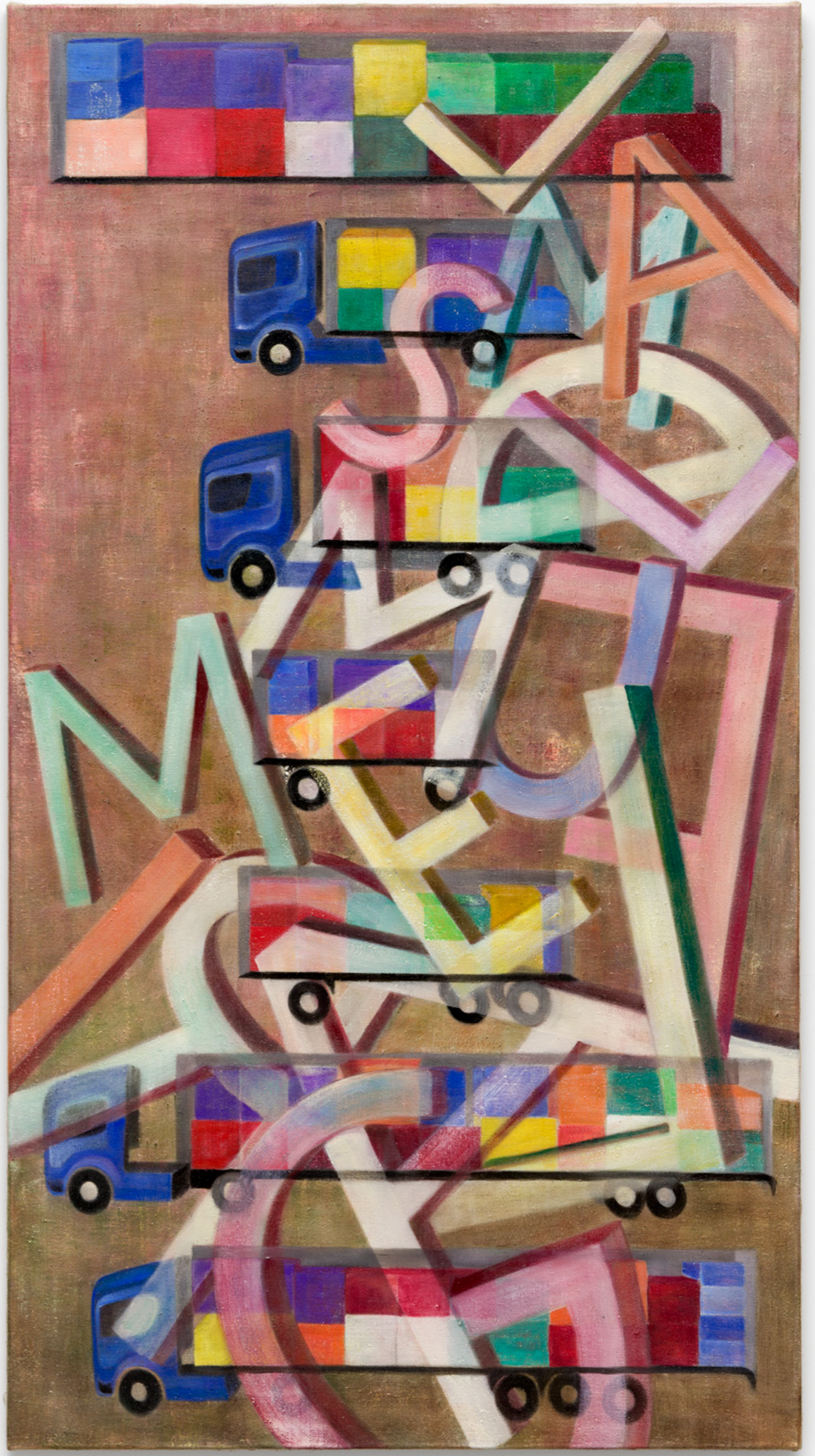




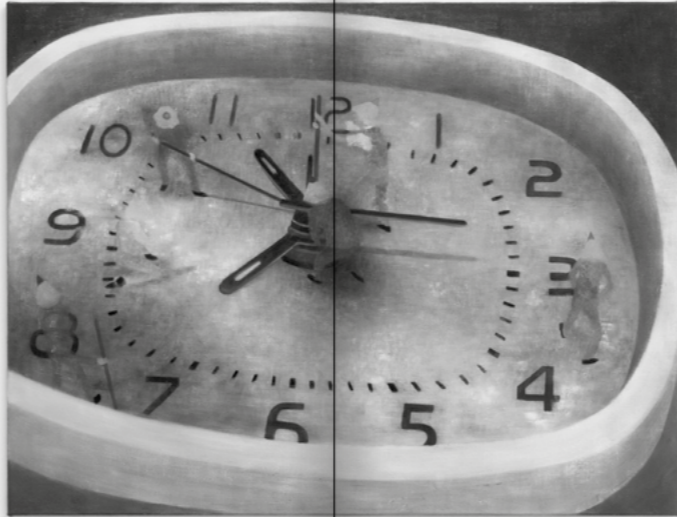












De foldes ind i de bestræbelser og den tvivl, som prækeret kunstnerisk arbejdede muligvis i det hele taget indebærer, og de bliver også en selvkritisk tænkning omkring de standardiserede kunstnum, hvor værkerne vises. Som Norgaard og hendes kunstnerkolllega Sanna Helena Berger skrev i en pressemeddelelse til deres udstilling *Die Installierte Kalle* i Düsseldorf sidste år:

“Among our shared passions is a desire to reflect, to critique and demand from artworks that they be aware of themselves, their history and the hierarchies they might partake in, if not define. One way of performing such critique could be to demand the iconic, tradition-ridden artwork, be it painting or minimalist sculpture, to come down from its pedestal. A way to attempt such a demand could be by depicting the pedestal itself.”

Selvom malerierne har et afgørende element af anti-realisme i sig, der kredser om spekulative fortællinger og absurde situationer, så er de også i forhandling med en konfus og til tider mørk ydre virkelighed. Men værkerenes performative omdannelser af sig selv, hvor symbolet gensidigt mimrer hinanden og siver ud i deres omgivelser (eller omgivelserne ind i dem) og bliver til farve eller tekstur, opstår der også en anden virkelighedsforummelse. Stemningen af destruktion opløser sig via infaan til humor og iboende vantrø til noget fundamentalt konstruktivt og nysgerrigt.

Ting, der aldrig kun er sig selv, men også ved siden af (eller inde i) sig selv, og mystiske grummede motorveje, der gradvist bliver farvede (og mere mystiske), undtager sig sprogets definerende væremåde.

Når sproget optæder i billederne, er det karakteristisk nok fragmenteret til mindste bestanddele, som kan sættes sammen på utallige måder. Det er tilfældet på de store billeders ved indgangen til et slags indkøbscenter, hvor sætningerne er gået i opløsning, og bogstaverne ligger sammenblandede og tunge i bunden af rammerne. Måske er det i øvrigt slet ikke billedboards, men snarere vægløse skærme, der fortætter forbi bygningskroppen og synes at lede mod himlen. I billedernes modelvirkeligheder mødes letthed og friktion som i en futuristisk film, hvor aiting er klart optegnet og alligevel diffus, fordi tingene ikke opfører sig, som man ville forvente.

De skilrer sammenstød mellem håndgribelighed og flygtighed, komur og farvetilblivelser, der går i stykker og samler sig igen. Som i personbilerne, der både gengives som kørende, svævende, smadrede og synkende objekter, skiftetvis optegnede og udvaskede til flossede farvemasser. Denne sensibilitet for tingenes plastiske foranderlighed og rekstruerbarhed gør, at billederne konstant er i bevægelse trods deres fastrosne tid. Malerpalæten er et Monet-agtigt åkandedblad, formet som et fosters udviklede ansigt, og bilen holder parkeret på hjernens plads, parat til at køre.

At tegne fra den ene prik til den næste har linjer tilbage til, hvordan mennesker i artusinder har dannet billeder på himlen ved at forbinde stjerner i mønstre. Begge tilgange er måder at indskrive figuraton i det abstrakte, at danne sine egne strukturer i det formløse. Man identificerer, ser efter mønstre, spjler sig i velkendte symboler, ser, hvordan de kan abstraheres, hvornår de stopper med at betyde noget.

Fraværet af mennesker i malerierne er med til at forstærke deres modelkarakter, eller om ikke andet at gøre deres skala en smule ubestemmelig, hvad der sikkert også hænger sammen med de udvaskede omgivelser. Men den menneskestemme stemning giver omvendt de malede objekter selv karakter af subjekter med egen handlkerkraft og vilje. En kunstersonbil er på en måde også et kunstsubjekt, og Norgaard peger på, at ordet auto bogstaveligt betyder selv. Ud over de selvbedste objekter optæder menneskelignende væsener dog også af og til i en slags overgangsformer mellem subjekter og objekter. I et billede er seks figurer klædt ud som farveblyanter med farvede drager og spidse blyantshætte. De er tilsyneladende i færd med at fiske et stort ur, som de befinder sig nede i og benytter som arbejdsplads. I deres arbejdede med blandt andet at fejle og justere på urets visere afgiver deres tøj blå, røde, gule og grønne farvenuancer til omgivelserne og forandler derved det ellers hvidlige ur til et atmosfærisk malerisk felt. Billedet sætter maleri i forbindelse med arbejdede og tid, det peger på, hvordan maleri er afhængigt af, skabes og distribueres i tid. Figurerne i billedet standser ganske vist ikke tiden, men de tydeliggør dens analoge karakter som en maskine, der går, samt dens afhængighed af energi udefra, i kontrast til 24/7-netværkerens ikke-tid. De orange jakkekædte mænd i et andet maleri kunne opfattes som en skildring af vindernes små forretningsmænd eller politikere (men også personificeringer af selve de maleriske strøg), der i det ydre udståler produktivitet og naviter. Også denne symbolske orden er ustabil; mændene synes virksomme og rådvilde, de står med foldede hænder på ryggen i et støret rum af eksplosive grønne, blå, lysrøde, lilla og gule farver, som både kunne være et diskotek og et udsnit af Claude Monets *Akande-serie*. Måske er det ikke engang flere personer, men den samme forretningsmand i forskellige positioner, der skildres? Mændenes tøj og hår og kroppe synes at flyde ud i rummet, og de opløser sig gradvist til farve, på vej til måske at forsvinde helt.

På forskellige måder synliggøres ydre strukturer og magtapparater, som omgiver, hvad det vil sige at arbejdede og forbruge i dag, og som en slags selvreflekterende eftertanke: Hvad er det for netværker og midler, som maleriet selv bevæger sig i og er afhængigt af? De tæmmer, som billederne vikler ind i hinanden, såsom transport, variliggørelse, økonomi, kreativitet, succes (eller mangel på samme), abstrakt information – en verden styret af automatiskeker uden for ens egen kontrol – er ikke kun generelle, men også konkrete spørgsmål til Norgaards egen praksis som maler.

O – OVERGADEN
Overgaden neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K
overgaden.org

Cecilie Norgaard
Emotionally Invested
Udstillingsperiode: 22.02.2025 – 04.05.2025
ISBN: 978-87-94311-26-7
EAN 9788794311267

Redaktør: Nanna Friis
Tekst: Rhea Dall, Sophia Rohwetter,
Magnus Thorø Clausen
Oversættelse: Nanna Friis
Korrektur: Sofie Vestergaard Jørgensen
Foto: David Styernholm

Denne publikation er støttet af Augustinus Fonden
Cecilie Norgaards udstilling har modtaget støtte fra
Statens Kunstfond
Statens Værksteder for Kunst
Den Hielmsterne-Rosenstrømske Stiftelse

Grafisk design: JanFare
Typografi: Glossy Magazine, Bold Decisions
Trykt hos: Raddraaier, Amsterdarn
Trykt i 150 eksemplarer

Spartegrisen går igen i flere malerier. I et af værkerne er det en hel hær af dem, der udgør bagtæppet bag en kollision af biler, mens blyanter, bogstaver og tal svæver omkring optimeret, i et andet er en blå spartegris knust, og i dens indre gemmer sig ikke en opsparring, men derimod en anden lige så knust lysrød spartegris – en gris i en gris (a pig in a pig), et billede i et billede (a pic in a pic). I baggrunden antyder et sojlediagram en form for finansiel

monitorering, men ligesom prik-til-prik-diagrammet er statistikken tømt for mening. "Diagrammer er gode, fordi man kan putte alt ind i dem," skriver Amy Stillman i "Notes on the Diagram." Ligesom spartegrisen, lastbil'en eller bilen i den forstand er en slags beholder, en slags "alle-er-velkomne"-struktur, der repræsenterer "den polymorfte forbindelse mellem diskrete elementer." På en måde fungerer de diskrete elementer i diagrammerne og beholderne i Norgaards malerier – lastbil, bil, globus, spartegris, blyant, bogstav, tal, farver – som betydningssbærende i en metonymisk struktur.

Inden for lingvistikken er metonymi et begreb, der beskriver, hvordan et ord, der betyder en ting,

ofte bruges til at referere til en lignende ting – baseret på nogle indforståede associationer eller grænseflader mellem tingene. Altså at navngive en enkelt del frem for at referere til helheden, for eksempel hjul som betegnelse for bil. I Norgaards malerier lader alt ind i sidste ende at referere til maleri: En lastbil er en bil er en beholder er en globus er en spartegris er penge er tid er en blyant er farve er maleri. "Metonymi er baseret på ord-til-ord-forbindelserne," skriver Jacques Lacan i "The Instance of the Letter". Inden for lacaniansk psykoanalyse beskæftiger metonymien sig med måderne, hvorpå betydningssbærende kan kobles sammen i en betydningsskæde, hvor den ene konstant refererer til den næste i en vedvarende forskydning eller udskydelse af mening. Således følger begæret – som altid er "begæret efter noget andet" – den samme metonymiske logik af kontinuerlig udskydelse: Så snart begærsobjektet er inden for rækkevidde, er det ikke længere lige så eftertragtet, og subjektets begæret retter sig mod et andet objekt. Måske begæret Norgaards malerier sig på en lignende måde fra et begærsobjekt til det næste og erstatter igen og igen en ting med en anden.

IGEN, LASTBILEN

I et tidligere maleri med titlen "nr-truck-big-journey" (2023) er der en hvid lastbil på et maleri inde i maleriet. Selve maleriet forestiller en bourgeois dagligstue med sofa, lænestol, en gulvlampe uden pære, et stuebord med to vaser uden blomster. Tomme beholdere, måske ligesom lastbil'en selv. Over sofaen, på den scenepgule væg, hænger et stort maleri af en lastbil, der kører gennem natten. Den transporterende klasse begæret sig i borgerskabets hjem.

3. Amy Stillman, "Notes on the Diagram", in: *Faux Pas. Selected Writings and Drawings*. Paris: After 8 Books, 2020, pp. 127-137; 129ff.

Lastbilsbilledet inde i maleriet ser ud til kun at være oplyst af det spredte hvide lys fra forlygterne og gadelygternes varme skær, selve pælene forsvinder i mørket, så lyset svæver i himlen ligesom vinduer eller hvide, grunde lættede. Grønne feltet af farve ligger som en tåge over himlen og lastbilens krop. Malerierne transporterer et billede af en lastbil, mens lastbil'en lader til at sætte malingen i bevægelse. Forstår du?

I et andet lastbilsmaleri fra samme serie er relationen mellem ude (lastbil'en på gaden om natten) og inde (bourgeois-interiøret) vendt om. Her er det ikke en indendørs væg, der bærer på et maleri af en lastbil, men lastbil'er, der transporterer malerier. Nogle af disse malerier inde i malerierne forestiller dunkle, forladte rum – auditorier og mødelokaler fyldt med af det turkise skær fra computerskærme og globusser. Men der er ingen derinde, ingen, der studerer, serverer, kigger på kunst eller på verden, og der er, som i Duras' film, heller ikke nogen, der kører den lastbil, som bærer maleriet. Førthuset er altid tomt eller for mørkt til, at man kan se ind i det. De fleste af Norgaards malerier er menneskestomme, men ikke tomme for arbejdere. I en tidligere værkserie er der blomsterearbejdere, små, men hårdtarbejdende antropomorfe margueritter, der glori ind i skærmene eller strækker ud, bøjer sig ind over kontorstole udstilling er arbejderne blyanter. Nogle lader til at være arbejdsløse kunstarebejdere, der hænger ud til en udstillingsskabning, andre er urmagere med blyantshætte, der bevæger tiden. I maleriet "Attention the Summit" er blyanterne blevet til spørgsagsagtige, orange figurer med harte og slips og uden ansigter. Det er hverken sjove blyanter til fernisering eller arbejdere i gang med revolutionen. Snarere er det ansigts- og rygtrædelsøe penselsløg, der giver sig ud for at være forretningsmænd. Men hvem ved, måske ville en lastbil en dag være kommet forbi, måske ville dens chauffør have været medlem af kommunistpartiet.

Spartegris, personbiler, ure, maleripalæer, autotransporter, motorvej, farveblyanter, forretningsmænd, diagrammer, tal, bogstaver og stjernekort. De konkrete og genkendelige motiver i Cecilie Norgaards malerier er alle hentet ud af vores rodde nutid, gængse hverdagsrerfaringer og barndomsuniverser. Men på trods af motivernes håndledelighed er de også ambivalente: De er transitive og transformative, de virker rastløse og synes hele tiden i færd med at blive noget andet. En maleripalæ er ikke bare en maleripalæ, men også samtidig en spartegris, og den lille personbil, der kører hen over palæten, forvandler den til en motorvej. Den flydende billedlighed i værkerne yder modstand mod spørgets tendens til at afgrænse tingene, der altid er flere tilstede på samme tid. Hvad sker der, når man kaster tingene sammen, hvilke nye affekter opstår der? Palæ-spartegris-motorvejen er overlejet af farvede parabel-lignende strøg, som når op til en lille regnbue øverst i billedet. Det kunne være en form for opsving eller nedture, samfundets kortlægning af sig selv, eller måske er det simpelthen strøg, en slags malerisk abstraktion. En allegori over maleriet som mobil investeringsobjekt?

Magnus Thorø

SYMBOLER PÅ AFVEJSE

Et trækulhuld er fastfrosset i nøjagtigt det splitsekund, hvor en autotransport er kørt galt på motorvejen, og de fragede personbiler kastes ud til alle sider. De primærfarvede biler er også lysende farveplamager, lysrød, gul, blå, lysblå, og ikke længere entydigt biler. Deres farver synes at smitte af på eller bløde ud i det omgivende øde motorvejslandskab. Den katastrofiske hændelse, som et trækulhuld er, er lige så meget et optisk farvestudie, en fremstilling af selve det at male som katastrofisk proces. Fra værret af faktiske personer i bilerne nedtoner indtrykket af dramatik og gør køretøjerne til mere autonome aktører. På trods af motiverets sammenhæng med fart og kaos er stemningen egnetlig meget harmonisk og komprompativ og langtraktion painting. I et andet billede er en forulykket blå personbil ved at gå i opløsning som genkendeligt objekt og forvandle sig til en abstrakt maskine eller et dekonstrueret bogstav. Bilets farve og omruds siver ud i det omgivende landskab, og figur og grund er ved at blive retninger pludselig også bliver relative. Malerierne er gennemgående malet løst og groft pixeleret og i mange lag. Deres baggrund fremtræder som ubestemt zoner (tomme veje, øde bjergene), men de er mindst lige så aktive og signifikante som de motiver, de omslutter, og som de aktivt indfarves eller alsmittes af. De peget performativt på sig selv som både illusionistiske rum og maleflader.

Der er i Norgaards malerier hele tiden denne dobbelthed mellem at henviser til noget og selv at være noget. Spartegris associerer umiddelbart til penge og opsparring og maleri som opsparringssymbol. De anskuelig gør den abstrakte forestilling om penge ved at være en slags minibanke for børn (som det fremgår tydeligt på engelsk, hvor de hedder "piggy banks"). I takt med samtidens techverdens begæret efter at blive immateriel og automatiseret er der måske også noget anarkonomistisk over spartegris (og maleriet?). De virker som levn fra en nær fortid, hvor penge stadig var materielle ting, man kunne have i hånden, med tyngde og taktilitet. Spartegrisene i Norgaards malerier har øjne, som kigger ud af billedet og etablerer en umiddelbar kontakt med os som beskuer. Ders blik er tomme og spørgende, og de er også ret cute som små (penge)væsener. Et billede forestiller en delvist knust spartegris, hvis overflade er malet i sorte grønne og blå nuancer, som var det et hav eller en globus. Inde i den knuste form gemmer sig en mindre spartegris, som også er gået i stykker, og som måske skjuler endnu mindre grise i sin mave; som en flktiv økonomi, hvor pengene, man troede var der, altid er et andet sted, eller måske ikke findes længere. I et andet maleri er en stor mængde spartegris stablet hult til bultet op uden for et kvadreret vindue med udsyn til nogle historiske og lidt dystre bygninger. Det er umuligt at afgøre, om det er en karikatatur af grådighed og velstand, eller hvilken historie der ligger bag situationen. Stabiliteten af grise er delvist overmalet med brede gestiske strøg, der giver dem en sjov turbulens og spørgsagsagtig livagtighed, får dem til at svæve mellem det immaterielle og konkrete. Ligesom de nittede spartegris knytter farveblyanterne med ansigter og arme sig også til barndommens verden og antyder mulige sammenhænge mellem maleri, kapitalisme, nativisme og skolen som institution for normer og første erfaringer. Man kan også tydeligt ane folkeskolens back-to-school skrivebøger, hæfter og første erfaringer. Den primærfarvede bogstaver og tal, der svæver rundt i flere af malerierne. En lille gruppe glade farveblyanter, pænt ordnet og næsten i farverækkefølge, holder et maleri (eller en skærm, et spejl, måske?) frem foran sig. Det er identisk med det rum, blyanterne selv står i, men er mere abstrakt ekspressionistisk og mere opløst i sin form. Forholdningen af billedrum gør værket lettere svimmelde. En lille farveblyant har et glas champagne i hånden, mens to blå blyanter tilsynsladende er i dyb samtale, lidt som til en kunstferisering, hvor det at se og blive set er mærkeligt viklet sammen. Men bag figurerne, som et diffust slør, forestiller maleriet også en grå metropol af mørklagte og lysende vinduer overdækket af en abstrakt stjernehimmel. Det er som to synkrone virkelighedszoner, der på mystisk vis eksisterer oven i hinanden. Stjernehimlen optæder også på et andet af malerierne, hvor den dog er forvandleret til en prik-til-prik-tegning for børn, hvor man ved at forbinde punkter i rækkefølge kan få et skjult billede til at træde frem.

INTRODUKTION

Disse billeder er i kritisk dialog med malerets historie, idet de peger på deres egen tilstedeværelse i kunstens logik og økonomi. Eksempelvis er der i et maleri en urskive, som ligner en malerpåle, hvorpå miniaturrearbejder er i gang – som et billede på spørgsmål om tid og (kunstnerisk) arbejde. I et andet værk er der strøet en prik-til-prik-tegning hen over oliemaleriets skildring af et trafikuheld. Et uheld, som sender billeder flyvende afsted i alle retninger, så de ligner farvelade i bevægelse. Således peger motiver, her bilene, helt konkret på sig selv som farve og på malerets tilblivelsesproces. På den måde viser værkerne ikke bare køretøjer og transport, de er også i sig selv transporteret eller i transformasjon – hele tiden på vej til at blive noget andet.

Sammen virker billederne som en form for optegnelse over arbejder- eller middelklassens almenne værktøjer, der her forvandles til maleriske, æstetiske objekter. I et maleri gengives lastbil og skibskonainere – nøglen til europæisk godshandel – som enstærkede firkanter. Dette understreger på den ene side malerets egen funktion som en transportabel handelsvare, samtidig med at det ændrer disse fragtoverflader, som typisk ses som uæstetiske, til noget, der minder om den tidlige modernismes abstrakte farveblokke.

Midt i denne opfordring til at skabe nye flader og forstelsler for, hvor kunsten og æstetikken opstår, er der noget foruroligende ved Norgaards udvæjsløse og cirkulære billedverden. I værkerne findes en kombination af legesyge og alvor, hvor malerierne ivrigt accelererer, bygger sig op og vokser, samtidig med at deres indhold visner, falmer og forulykker. Når den nuttede sparegris knuses, afslører den blot en anden ødelagt sparegris.

Rhea Dall
Leder og chefkurator på O – Overgaden,
Februar 2025

Cecilie Norgaard (f. 1991, DK) er uddannet fra Akademiets billedende Kunst i Wien (2021) og bor og arbejder i Wien og Berlin. Hun har tidligere udstillet på bl.a. Rinde am Rhein, Düsseldorf (2024); Marteo Cantarella, København (2024); Den Frie, København (2022); og mumok, Wien (2022). Udstillingen på O – Overgaden er Norgaards første institutionelle soloudstilling.

Det er en stor fornøjelse at introducere denne publikation, der udkommer i forbindelse med Cecilie Norgaards soloudstilling *Emotionally Invested* på O – Overgaden. Siden 2021 har O – Overgaden med generøs støtte fra Augustinus Fonden produceret en publikationsstrække, der udgives i forbindelse med kunsthallens soludstillinger. Målsætningen med denne serie er at mangfoldiggøre samtalene under og efter udstillingerne og åbne op for, at nyt materiale kan udspringe heraf.

I dette tilfælde har kurator på Den Frie Magnus Thorø Clausen bidraget med et essay om Norgaards billedsprog, mens den tyske kunstskskribent Sophia Rohwetter har bidraget med refleksioner over de mange lag i arbejdet. En stor og varm tak til begge bidragsydere. Derudover vil jeg gerne takke hele O – Overgadens team for den store indsats i forbindelse med udstillingen, og naturligvis også fanfarer, vores grafiske designere for deres dedikerede arbejde på denne publikation. Sidst, men ikke mindst, en særlig tak til Cecilie for at dele sit materiale – fra koncept til uddivede samtaler – med os alle sammen, både gennem udstillingen og denne publikation.

I Cecilie Norgaards mættede og farverige, konceptuelle oliemalerier leges der lunefuldt med de hierarkiske forskyldninger mellem høj- og lavkultur, som nutidens samfund producerer. Hvis oliemaleriet engang var et vigtigt middel til at understrege overklassens magt, insisterer Norgaard i sin nye værkserie, skabt til O – Overgaden, på at vende denne fortælling på hovedet ved i stedet at fokusere på helt almindelige objekter. Farveblyanter, bogstaver og tal; sparegris, biler, ure og lastbiler crashes, gennæret eller mangecdobles i malerierne, som samlet set skaber et humoristisk, absurd univers af skoleting, penge og protestantisk tidsprek.

Som del af et cirkulært allabret indgår hver enkelt af Norgaards motiver, som også inkluderer arbejder, byarkitektur og skematisk grafer, i en større billedkreds af gentagne figurer, der flyder fra et maleri til et andet. Motiverne er centralt placeret og teatralisk belyst, ofte på mørk baggrund, som var de kontekstløse scenografer – til tider omgivet af et generisk, renæssanceglignende landskab.

OVERGADEN



ISBN: 978-87-94311-26-7

EAN 9788794311267

Cecilie Norgaard
Emotionally Invested
Udstillingsperiode: 22.02.2025 – 04.05.2025

O – OVERGADEN
Overgaden neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org





◆ 124

◆ 116

◆ 113

◆ 138