

Matthew Ronay
Polypastoraline
28.08 – 19.10.2019

Nils Stærk is pleased to present our fifth solo exhibition with American artist Matthew Ronay. The exhibition *Polypastoraline* presents 11 new basswood sculptures - all in a vibrant, abstract language that carries a rich variation of references.

The title is an invented word and reflects the main idea of the exhibition. *Polypastoraline* is constructed of (poly-) many + (pastoral) relating to rural life + (-ine) denoting of or pertaining to.

Since antiquity, the theme of the Pastoral has been used in poetry, music, and art to evoke a place or state of mind that embodies the rapture of an undisturbed, peaceful landscape. From the frescoes of Pompeii, to the classical strains of Beethoven's symphonies and the idealized landscapes of Claude and Poussin, the pastoral subject was used to evoke harmony, reverie and serenity. Over time, as the natural world has become increasingly soiled by human intervention, the ethos expressed by the pastore has acquired darker connotations, where dismay and a sense of loss loom large over the demise of bucolic sanctity. And given the increasingly rapid pace of toxic climate change, the emergence of new paradigms for thematizing nature is inevitable.

Polypastoraline takes this shift as its point of departure, with objects that reimagine what the Pastoral might signify many generations in the future. If traditional examples of natural beauty are no longer relevant, what might their progeny look like? The detritus of the constructed environment from decaying technologies to new organisms born from a polluted gene pool, forms the backbone of the syntax used in the 11 sculptures presented as encapsulating the exhibition.

The reading of the sculptures are a remembrance of analog technologies - rendered in a bright palette of colors that alternates between warmth, desolation, discomfort and joy. The otherwise abstract works are composed of sinuous forms that emulate the grasping of polluted air, a figure reclining in highly surveilled terrain, caged organisms, intelligent plant life, and mutated musical instruments, radar arrays and antennae. Thus, the utopias they encapsulate are both welcoming and horrific, peaceful and disruptive, pristine and diseased.

We look forward to seeing you for the opening
Wednesday August 28, 2019, 17:00 – 20:00

Matthew Ronay (b. 1976, Louisville, KY) lives in New York. In 2016, his work was the subject of solo-presentations at the Blaffer Art Museum in Houston, and the Pérez Art Museum Miami, with a fully-illustrated catalogue published on the occasion. He has exhibited extensively at major institutions worldwide, including: Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK; Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, Louisville, KY; Kunstverein Lingen, Germany; University of Louisville, KY; Artpace, San Antonio, TX; Serpentine Gallery, London; SculptureCenter, New York; and Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London. Ronay participated in the 2013 Lyon Biennale, curated by Gunnar Kvaran, and the 2004 Whitney Biennial. His works are in private and public collections, including: Kistefos Museum, Norway; ARoS Art Museum, Denmark; Astrup Fearnley, Norway; Dallas Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Pérez Art Museum Miami, MoMA New York and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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