

KÖNIG GALERIE

ELMGREEN & DRAGSET

SHORT STORY

16 MAY – 2 AUGUST 2020

ST. AGNES | NAVE

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to the current situation surrounding the Covid-19 epidemic, the exhibition can only be visited after booking a time slot and the gallery will allow a restricted number of visitors at a time into the space to keep everyone safe.

For their first solo exhibition at KÖNIG GALERIE in Berlin, opening May 16th, Elmgreen & Dragset will present three new figurative sculptures within an immersive setting that transforms the visual appearance of the upper gallery, the NAVE, at St. Agnes.

Short Story sets the stage for a match between two boys. When entering the gallery space visitors will encounter an almost full-size tennis court, slightly raised off the ground. A net in the middle divides the two players and creates a sort of horizontal diptych. The white lines painted onto the orange-brown ground surface not only indicate the set rules of the sport, but also visually remind us of the grid principles of Modernism and the road markings that regulate our behavioural patterns within public space. The white-painted figurative bronze sculptures of the boys are placed diagonally at opposing ends of the playing field, small and isolated on the large plane. The boys' bodies and gazes are turned away from each other, the dialogue and play between them have come to an end. Rather than joy, a discomfort seems to have arisen from the game, for both "winner" and "loser". The scene is a freeze frame capturing the charged moment ensuing a defeat, where the audience, as onlookers, fulfil the narrative. Was it a fair game? Is it ever a fair game?

In a corner beyond the tennis court, there is a third figure of an elderly man half asleep in his wheelchair. With his eyelids closing, his interior world appears to grow larger than his exterior as he slowly withdraws from the reality around him. It is as if the tennis match between the two boys is just a vision in his mind – a distant memory reappearing in a dream. Whilst inviting contemplation on topics like individualism and competition, the scenario with its abrupt narratives, the ostensible collapse of time and the colliding realities in Elmgreen & Dragset's *Short Story* provide us with the possibility of multiple readings.

Elmgreen & Dragset, who have collaborated as an artist duo since 1995, have lived and worked in Berlin since 1997. In their artistic practice they pursue questions of identity and belonging, and through working methods that often challenge conventional modes of exhibition-making, the artist duo aims to re-contextualize or alter the conditions for how we, as an audience, perceive sculptural objects.

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OPENING HOURS
TUE – SAT 10 AM – 6 PM
SUN 12 – 6 PM
APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE
ON KOENIGGALERIE.COM

KÖNIG GALERIE

The artists have held numerous solo exhibitions in art institutions worldwide, including most recently a survey show of their sculptural practice at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2019-20), and their exhibition at The Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018-19), where they transformed the gallery space into an abandoned public swimming pool. Elmgreen & Dragset have realised several public sculptures including Van Gogh's Ear, presented first by Public Art Fund at the Rockefeller Center, New York in 2016 and now installed at K11 in Hong Kong; their Bent Pool was installed in Pride Park, Miami Beach in December 2019. In 2008, the artists made the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime, which is permanently installed in Berlin's Tiergarten park, and in 2019, the Hamburger Bahnhof acquired their Statue of Liberty (2018) for the sculpture garden.

Their work has been included in biennials such as the Bangkok (2018), Istanbul (2013, 2011, 2001), Gwangju (2006, 2002) and Venice Biennale (2009, 2003), where they received a special mention for their exhibition The Collectors in the Nordic and Danish Pavilions in 2009. In 2017 the artists curated the Istanbul Biennial.

Works by the artists are included in numerous collections, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo; Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Hamburger Bahnhof-Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv; and the Benesse Art Site, Naoshima, among many others.

In 2002, Elmgreen & Dragset were awarded the Preis der Nationalgalerie für Junge Kunst and the artist duo received the B.Z.-Kulturpreis in January 2020.

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