

## BORTOLAMI

**Lena Henke and Michael Craig-Martin**

***Apple Red Cranberry House***

**The Upstairs**

**November 4 – December 23, 2022**

Bortolami is pleased to present a two-person exhibition with Lena Henke and Michael Craig-Martin in the Upstairs. Staged in a former loft converted into a gallery space, the show combines the interiors of home with the outside world.

In this unique pairing, the two artists' off-kilter, vividly multi-colored sculptures and paintings offer imaginative approaches to quotidian household objects. Craig-Martin's sleek acrylic paintings of idealized household sundries, fruit, and flora meet Henke's miniaturized houses and ceramic lily pads, along with her rubber-coated, 3-D milled kitchen appliances.

Henke's practice, as put by author Carlos Kong, "[reimagines] the embodied experience of space." Her three series of works are linked by her ongoing research in landscape design, urban planning, and architecture. The floor-based ceramic houses glazed in primary colors replicate a surrealist piece of utopian architecture—Pier Francesco Orsini's *Leaning House*, constructed in 1552, as part of the infamous Garden of Bomarzo, a verdant complex of grotesque and fantastical sculpture. Henke's new wall-mounted, ceramic lily pads likewise relate to her interest in sculpture gardens and landscape architecture, originating from her exploration of Roberto Burle Marx's iconic natural designs.

Henke's most recent kitchen sculptures result from intensive research into her temporary home in Berlin's Hansaviertel, a neighborhood saturated with postwar modernist apartment buildings from the likes of Walter Gropius, Oscar Niemeyer, and Le Corbusier. In the late 1950s, designer Dieter Rams furnished over half of these homes with appliances from Braun. Henke selected four of these items; a stand mixer, blender, citrus juicer, and coffee machine, which she digitally enlarged, 3D-milled, and coated in rubber. Installed in the Upstairs kitchen, the sculptures point to the former life of the space as a classic New York City loft. Henke will also debut a new comic book outlining and illustrating her extensive research on the Hansaviertel project.

Since the late 1970s, Michael Craig-Martin has rendered everyday, mass-produced items in clear, isometric forms. This practice began as an exercise in reduction—the most basic gesture he could conjure was to draw a single object. He sought to draw not just an object, but also a version existing between its absolute generalization and a specific iteration.

As technology has evolved over the last four decades, so too have Craig-Martin's subjects and processes. Craig-Martin drew the items by hand, then with black crepe tape in the 70s, and now works digitally, isolating the forms in acrylic on aluminum resulting in sleek, colorful paintings. His color choices—which serve as a vehicle for aesthetic judgment given the ready-made nature of his subjects—verge on artificial. Cans, forks, buckets, and work gloves appear bright magenta, turquoise, and purple, virtually disrupting their identities.

In 2020, Craig-Martin began drawing organic forms including flowers, fruit, and vegetables. As an acute observer of the ordinary, he posits that these images are "objects that we make, the ordinary objects of use, the objects of daily life, that is the greatest record of who we are...". These images follow a circuitous evolution that reflects the current moment at any given time. His works depicted only analog items (shoes, chairs, utensils), progressing to those of a digital age (calculators, laptops, and iPhones), and only now reverting to the rich plant life that existed well before the advent of any of these man-made technologies. Though these newer subjects may be ephemeral, they too are distributed for consumption and permeate our daily lives.

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**Lena Henke** (b. 1982 in Warburg, Germany) lives and works in New York. Henke has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Belvedere Palace, Kunsthalle Zurich, Schirn Kunsthalle, Kunstverein Braunschweig, and White Flag projects. Her work has also been shown in numerous institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Kunsthalle Bern, Hessel Museum of Art, the Sprengel Museum in Hannover, and MoCA Detroit. Henke been featured in major international exhibitions including the Timisoara Contemporary Art Biennale, Romania, (2017); *Manifesta 11*, Zurich, Switzerland (2016); *The 9<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale*, Berlin, Germany (2016); *Le Biennale de MONTREAL*, Montreal, Canada, (2016); at the *Triennale of Small Scale Sculpture*, Fellbach, Germany (2016); and *The New Museums Triennial*, New Museum, New York (2015). Henke's work is in the collections of ICA Miami, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Hessel Museum of Art, MAMCO Geneva, Kunsthalle Bern, and Kunsthalle Bielefeld among others. Most recently, Henke won the 2022 Marta Award which includes a forthcoming publication and solo exhibition at Museum Marta Herford in 2023.

**Michael Craig-Martin** (b. 1941 in Dublin, Ireland) lives and works in London. Craig-Martin's work has been included in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. He also has permanent large-scale installations that are on view at Laban Dance Center, London (in collaboration with Herzog and de Meuron); European Investment Bank, Luxembourg; and Bloomberg Headquarters, London. Some of his solo museum exhibitions include *Always Now*, Kunstverein Hannover, Germany (1998); *IVAM*, Centre de Carme, Spain (2000); *Living*, Sintra Museum of Modern Art, Portugal (2001); Arp Museum, Remagen, Germany (2005); *Signs of Life*, Kunsthhaus Bregenz, Austria (2006); *Climate Change*, Magasin-Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France (2006); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Ireland (2006–07); New Art Centre, Roche Court, England (2006, 2011); Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas (2010, 2015); Rugby Art Gallery and Museum, England (2012); *Less Is Still More*, Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany (2013); Chatsworth House, Bakewell, England (2014); *NOW*, Shanghai Himalayas Museum (2015), traveled to Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan, China; and *Here and Now*, Hangaram Art Museum, South Korea (2022). Craig-Martin was an artist trustee of Tate from 1989 to 1999 and was elected to the Royal Academy in 2006. In 2016 he was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to art.