

Press Release

Nora Turato

NOT YOUR USUAL SELF?

September 16–November 7, 2023

Public Reception: September 15, 6–9pm

Sprüth Magers, Berlin

Sprüth Magers

In recent years, Nora Turato has emerged as one of the most exciting new voices on the contemporary art scene. Throughout her practice – which spans performance, video and graphic design – she examines the ephemeral nature of language, using text as her artistic source material. Drawing from film, advertising, literature, conversations, social media captions and theater, she deploys a collection of appropriated words, sentences, fragments and quotes with sharp wit and studied precision. Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are pleased to announce a solo exhibition by Nora Turato at Sprüth Magers, Berlin, which will debut a series of new enamel panels featuring a custom typeface as well as a site-specific wall painting that cut through the cacophony of everyday life and reflect on the vernacular of present-day visual culture and zeitgeist.

Collating the information streams of the world in text pools, Turato publishes “scrapbooks of our culture” once a year. For her performances, murals and enamel panels alike, she culls from these collections that reflect not only her personal influences and surroundings but also act as seismographs of social preoccupations. Whilst Turato oscillates between different pitches and personas in her captivating performances, in her enamel and mural works, she uses graphic design as a tool to adjust tone, change a word’s inflection, or adopt a different type of voice. Employing words as both medium and content, Turato turns familiar sentences into incisive observations of the ways in which language determines our everyday. Her varied works examine the current era, which is marked by an abundance of words and their continuous repetition that causes their meaning to dwindle rapidly.

Each of the seven multi-part vitreous enamel panels is mounted on steel and demonstrates a sculptural quality. Their phrases are rendered in a serif font, which Turato developed in collaboration with Sam de Groot and Kia Tasbihgou. Reminiscent of 1980s vector graphics, the work’s grids depict tunnels with a central vanishing point or round shapes in prime colors. A visual symbol of the decade, the grid is representative of its optimism for technology and a computer-driven society. Previously synonymous with creating a futuristic space full of possibility, here it perhaps describes a future that never was. *this place is sick / always something...* (2023) proclaims the work’s title-giving sentences in capitalized blue letters, while its background pulls viewers into the red rabbit hole of a slanted matrix. Although the

enamel works – which are constructed spaces, not illustrations – display a slick appearance akin to the marketing industry’s mass productions, they are the result of a laborious process that pushes the technical limits of both material and printmaking. These large-format panels are baked several times at 800 degrees, each layer painted and fired separately. By combining bold, eye-catching questions such as “NOT YOURSELF?” that evoke the overbearing tone of self-help culture with a lowercase (possibly inner) voice, Turato analyzes our tools for making sense of the world around us.

The artist’s wall paintings amplify the tension between form and content she generates through her slow and deliberate mode of production. Easily confused for digital creations, their meticulous precision is achieved by hand; Turato designs stencil patterns, which are printed on paper, taped to the wall, cut out and then filled with multiple layers of paint. Discernible only from up close, subtle imperfections tell of their making. The wall-covering mural presents the background to the enamel panels, thus causing friction between the rigor of the artist’s practice and the works’ fragmented, decontextualized messages.

Moving between light, hopeful moments and dark instances of existential dread, the show reads as a poem, its rhythm provided by its colors and words. Turato’s glossy works tap into an omnipresent phraseology and extend its short half-life to reveal a liminal space between prophecy and lunacy, perception and reality. Plucking, processing and performing contemporary concerns and parlance, the artist presents strangely intimate incantations that channel both the essence and the nonsense of what collectively moves us.

Nora Turato (*1991, Zagreb) lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include Museum of Modern Art, New York (2022), Secession, Vienna (2021), MGLC: International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana (2020), Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf (2020), Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto (2019), Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2019) and Beursschouwburg, Brussels (2019). Nora Turato will be presenting new work at Performa in New York and in an upcoming solo exhibition at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in early 2024. Her works will be included in a group exhibition at Schinkel Pavillon and Brücke-Museum in Berlin, which opens in September.

For further information and press inquiries, please contact Silvia Baltschun (sb@spruethmagers.com).

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