

GALERIE FORSBLOM

Aurora Reinhard: Day of Life

Galerie Forsblom, October 25-November 26, 2024

At first glance, Aurora Reinhard's patinated bronzes are reminiscent of ancient miniature sculptures, but closer inspection reveals a glaring contrast between the material and theme: in her new exhibition, Reinhard offers a peek into the daily life of a Barbie doll. The prestige associated with bronze stands in stark contrast to Reinhard's typical pastel-hued Pop art and surrealist imagery. The texture of bronze furthermore undercuts the sugary sweetness of the Barbie world with its gritty roughness. Reinhard's Barbies appear in a variety of everyday situations, epitomizing generic Western ideals of beauty, but cracks are revealed in their flawless façade: Barbie is shown to be imperfect just as humans are. At heart, this is precisely what Barbies represent to Reinhardt: they mirror real life in the same manner as childhood games of make-believe. Behind their glimmering façades, celebrities and social media stars deal with the same grim realities as ordinary people do – the same hassles, sadness, and stress of daily life.

Reinhard represents a generation that grew up with Barbie dolls. Barbie offered a figure with whom they could identify, like a companion in life. Although the artist herself has never related to the gender stereotype represented by Barbie, she has always felt an urge to defend and admire this doll: why shouldn't Barbie be exactly the way she is?

Reinhard's art is based on her own life and themes such as identity formation, gender roles, sexuality, and the complexities of life's journey. Her practice carries on the legacy of the feminist art canon, which raises issues around the body, biographical experience and personal feelings.

Aurora Reinhard (b. 1975) graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2003. In 2002 she was chosen as the recipient of the ZKM International Media Art Award in Karlsruhe, and in 2019 she was nominated for the Ars Fennica Prize. She has exhibited her work in numerous museums and galleries, including Turku Art Museum, Amos Rex, the Ateneum Art Museum and Sweden's National Museum of Fine Arts. Her work is held in collections including Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, the State Art Deposit Collection and the German Historical Museum.