

Press release

## **Rasmus Nilausen** ***Moving Image***

7 March – 12 April 2025

It is with great pleasure that we present *Moving Image*, Rasmus Nilausen's first exhibition at Galleri Bo Bjerggaard.

Born in Denmark and based in Barcelona, Rasmus Nilausen unfolds his distinctive approach to painting through twelve new works in this exhibition. In connection with the show, we have invited the artist Dexter Dalwood to write an introduction to Nilausen's practice, placing his work in a broader artistic context.

Name, no, nothing is nameable, tell, no, nothing can be told, what then, I don't know,  
I shouldn't have begun.  
Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*.

I'm going to turn over a new leaf in Spain. I'm going to turn over several new leaves.  
Des McGrath, *The Last Days of Disco*.

In the art of Rasmus Nilausen, a unique lexicon embodies the language of painting, as well as the challenges and problems of making it. He has developed this distinct language by employing metonyms that illuminate the underlying codes of painting, suggesting that these codes have become overused and diminished over time. This evolution acts as the grammar of his work.

Nilausen has built up a language that is at ease with this essential ambiguity. Don't confuse ambiguity with vagueness; rather, it arises from the heightened stakes he places on the viewer. He understands that painting and its tropes and conventions lay battered and redundant as much of late twentieth-century theory around painting has waned — positions that were once considered edgy have now become fluffy — splintered into tributaries of a once strong current.

These works then often make bold declarations that then backtrack, questioning and almost apologising for their earlier assertions. They often crack a joke while simultaneously conveying a note of despair. As viewers, we are not mere external observers: these paintings draw and compel us into the forcefield of the space — finding ourselves childlike, in amongst it so to speak — but also confined, much like entering a room or a wardrobe whose door has closed behind us.

A cascading wall of black brushstrokes conjures up a Yeti-like figure, its long sockless feet occupy half of the canvas in *Out of Bounds*, 2025. The scale is significant; it makes one feel smaller than this humanoid presence. The figure possesses legs and perhaps a torso, with a cartoon speech bubble for a head juxtaposed against an unravelling tape measure. Whether the image is personal is irrelevant; it evokes the vibe of a felt memory. This is a recurring experience while looking at Nilausen's paintings. The skeleton of the painting is revealed at first glance, yet their success lies in the ability to engage the viewer, to examine

the components. Also, the act of looking and reading is firmly rooted in the physical world of memory.

This reminds me of John Baldessari's thoughts on his own work, where he noted that memory lacks a true human measure of scale. What holds significance when recalling an image is based on the emotional weight it carries. For instance, if you are running late for a train, the clock you are desperately seeking feels disproportionately large, while the people you sprint past in the station hardly register. Consequently, when conjuring an image of that event, the clock must dominate the work, appearing much larger than everything else.

In *Moving Image*, 2025, two weary, detached legs appear to have trudged endlessly across a tundra marked by human intrusions and scattered art tropes. There are flat pieces of wood with no apparent purpose, footprints that have disrupted the surface, and signs that the ongoing cycle is about to resume. As the two feet gradually turn away from us, it becomes clear that movement is about to begin again.

The title *Table of Contents* (2025) suggests an imaginary list that relates not only to the single painting but to the broader itinerary of painting itself. A cloud is served up on what looks to be a mantelpiece, while a cornucopia of objects is haphazardly scattered in front of us. This chaotic heap evokes a sense of familiarity with still life arrangements in front of generic 17th-century landscapes as backgrounds to figures, reminiscent of a time before landscape painting was a recognized genre.

This notion of eliciting a response from the viewer to the inherent known bodies of painting history is both simplistic in execution and rich in interpretive possibilities. For instance, in *Places* (2025), Nilausen freely annotates all the components of a landscape — foreground, middle ground, and background. Therefore, the way he chooses to paint these elements is intentioned, prompting the viewer to do the work. Here the features serve as abbreviations or symbols; large turpsy, transparent brushstrokes that fold over each other become a sign for 'Sky,' while dark and purple, block like shapes hemmed in purple become symbols for 'Landscape.' Even a squiggle in the upper left-hand side of the painting potentially signifies 'Bird'.

However, appearances and their manifestations are distinct concerns. The process of salvaging what can still resonate today relies heavily on the context of the scenario. Simply comprehending the mechanics of how paintings function does not necessarily lead to making successful works or the desire to produce pieces that echo previous milestones in your work. The real challenge is not in understanding the mechanics of 'the how to' make a painting but in discovering something in that process that unlocks your previous approach to it. These paintings fully embody that latter sentiment.

As Samuel Beckett noted over half a century ago, "You must go on. I can't go on. I'll go on."

Dexter Dalwood, 2025