

KERSTIN BRÄTSCH
UNSTABLE TALISMANIC RENDERING
MAY 2 – JUNE 21 2014

OPENING RECEPTION: 6 – 8 PM

So I begin staging the various layers that account for these new works, paintings made using a marbling technique, the series *Unstable Talismanic Renderings*.

Firstly, there is the fact that I speak another language. I am always already operating with various tongues. German and English. Secondly, consider painting a language. Consider craft another language. Consider how materials speak different languages. Paint is one language. Glass is another language.

Is a brush a tongue? Is a finger a voice? A drop of paint from a certain height makes a splash. Tools are words. English speakers have marveled at my misuse of English. The most generative in this case is when I called the marbling paintings "my marbles."...Marbles being an expression of sanity. Or anger. "To lose one's marbles." It can also mean something like good stuff, less commonly used; if one picks up a prize, "to collect one's marbles."

I describe the marblings as being made by dropping a drop of ink from high—the height determines the width of the mark—so the descriptive noun is also the verb: to drop a drop. A raindrop functions in the same way, and a teardrop. Are they voluntary or involuntary? How much is marked, how much is instinct? How many are ready-made drops? I imitate drops, and I drop the glass marble, I shatter the glass, so to say, into a marbling technique.

I want to break apart the brush stroke, so it is only natural that to shatter it I must drop it, and so to drop it I must literally drop a drop of paint. This shattering produces a brush stroke out of a destructive impulse. It undoes the hand by involving gravity. The micro touch versus the macro universe. My hand is still working, but in connection with elemental forces.

I am drawn to the occult power of the misunderstood. Craft is a language different to painting. I exaggerate craft and I am not versed in the language very deeply. I import foreign hands, in this case, those of the German paper marbler Dirk Lange. *Unstable Talismanic Renderings* need to be made by four hands, two of an artist and two of a craftsman...Dramatically oversize, they loom like ambient projections of smaller fetish pages. Talisman-monster mocking the amulet, only to become a haunting specter itself.

The talismanic is unstable. How else to explain the way it takes on a life of its own?

... So the eyes, assholes, belly buttons, voids, mouths, holes, hairy edges, antennae, and all other parts ramble along the paper, with and without purpose. They could be from deep space, or deep underwater; both miasmas we normally need machinery to see into.

What is my problem? The language of painting.

What is my solution? Use the language of painting, all the languages, not only one. Describe painting as a language itself. Show how language mistakes, mix-ups, muteness, a paranoia of speaking about it, and misunderstanding are all valid ways to speak about painting. Shared root words, sometimes connected properly, sometimes pure coincidence, create a network of meaning.

Craft dissolves the I. Question the voice. Use 4 hands, use another voice.

Play it back, like hearing my voice on a voicemail.

The appeal of each marbling being unique, contradiction because it is made with a technique...

so subjectivity is undermined by material and process, though it would seem to speak over and beyond the impersonal...

cloud and wind, smoke, floating

elemental, body (blowing), comb... touch

—Selections from "What is at Hand?" by Allison Katz written in the voice of Kerstin Brätsch, published in *Kerstin Brätsch, Unstable Talismanic Rendering*, Gavin Brown's enterprise, 2014

— With gratitude to master marbler Dirk Lange

Kerstin Brätsch was born in Hamburg, Germany. A master student with Prof. Lothar Baumgarten at the University of Arts in Berlin, she received her MFA in 2007 from Columbia University School of the Arts, New York. Select exhibitions include Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (with DAS INSTITUT), Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich (with Adele Röder), The 54th Venice Biennial, Venice (as DAS INSTITUT), MoMA/ PS1, New York (with DAS INSTITUT and UNITED BROTHERS), Parc Saint Léger, Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju, Sculpture Center, New York (as DAS INSTITUT), New Museum, New York (with DAS INSTITUT), Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (as DAS INSTITUT). She lives and works in New York.

