

PRESS RELEASE 31.08.2018

## ABOVE THE TREELINE

VIRGINIA OVERTON, JON PESTONI,  
REZI VAN LANKVELD, AMBERA WELLMANN

6 September – 13 October 2018

Opening preview: Thursday 6 September, 17–21 h

Bloemenhofplein 5 Place du Jardin aux Fleurs  
1000 Brussels

Above The Treeline is a group exhibition featuring the work of Virginia Overton, Rezi Van Lankveld, Jon Pestoni and Ambera Wellmann. The exhibition will be held at our downtown gallery at Bloemenhofplein 5 and will open on Thursday September 6 as part of Brussels Gallery Weekend parcours. The exhibition will run thru 13 October 2018.

Above The Treeline is a geographical marker, the place, at a certain altitude, where tree growth stops and a new type of landscape sets in. The climate is characterised by low air pressure. The exhibition uses this metaphor to look at four artist and how their work crosses a line, creating other relations with history, meaning, self and today.

The artists in Above the Treeline approach "making" not as aesthetically manipulating an object, rather as altering our perception of time, space and self, forcing us to step out of the moment, into a space and time that looks familiar, but is fundamentally different. It will juxtapose different approaches to material, figuration and abstraction, from Jon Pestoni's use of cat litter, to the free flow of paint in Rezi Van Lankveld's work. From Ambera Wellmann's allegorical representations to Virginia Overton's sculptural interventions with found materials.

## ARTISTS

Virginia Overton (USA, 1971) builds her sculptures out of what have been deemed "masculine" materials such as Sheetrock, mud, and wood beams, defying standards of female art-making practices. Overton's works have an elegant ingenuity and strange intuitive logic in their rough-hewn, unfinished appearances. By using discarded materials, and revisiting existing compositions or genres within her own work, Overton's practice is characterized by transformation as method. Giving new meaning or function to existing form unbalances our fixed understandings of tension, gravity and their meaning.

Jon Pestoni's (1969, USA) optically charged paintings each layer several compositional orders – geometric forms, figuration, graphic art, and Abstract Expressionism – such that they become an inextricable contradiction. The surfaces of his work are rich with drips, splashes, dry on dry brush strokes and paint mixed with cat litter, all in varying degrees of transparency. At the edges accrue fragments of cartoon figures and illustrations like bits of paper escaping from a file folder. They obstruct the free deployment of paint and add a deeply psychological dimension to his painting.

Rezi Van Lankveld (NL, 1973) is known for her small and medium sized paintings. They have a presence and immediacy that can be described for lack of better words as an affectionate infinity, a borderless elsewhere. The complex and contradictory interplay of immaterial paint, formal play, figurative hints and fauvist palette are created through Van Lankveld process of pouring paint loosely from a can onto the canvas, then pushing and pulling the paint until compositions emerge. Her brightened liquid palette recalls the work of Georgia O'keefe or Helen Frankenthaler, while her biomorphic shapes come closer to El Greco and Philip Guston. Soft, fluid and porous her works are tangible mirages.

Ambera Wellmann's (CA, 1982) uncanny clair-obscur paintings are symbolical compressions addressing the historical as much as the present. She looks at magazines and art history through an allegorical lens and finds iconographic material that allows her to speak from memory and imagination from a third person perspective. Wellmann's pictures of human bodies or still life compositions are both familiar and strangely alienating. Mannerist, slight deformations in otherwise familiar scenes lead us away from the center. In all of them, fragmentation gnaws as a slowly eroding force that inevitably makes flesh become cold, glow become pale and sweat become tears. On the other side of life and alienation, death reveals itself as a driving force. In the work of Wellmann, these dynamics appear as seen from a feminist perspective. By exploring the historical genres of still life, erotic rêverie and allegory, she finds ways to make her own, deeply lived, the eroticism that has imagined, challenged and described woman throughout the ages.

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