

Press release  
May 2019

Magali Reus  
Private Road

May 4 to June 23, 2019  
39 Great Jones Street, New York, NY 10012  
Opening on Friday, May 3, 6 to 8 pm

Eva Presenhuber is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition by the London-based Dutch sculptor Magali Reus.

Reus' works possess an innate organizational logic: they absorb the miscellany of the world's material landscape, extracting from it a language of vital parts. Their choreography of components emerges out of the intersection of virtual (3D modeling, 3D printing) and more physical processes (wood carving, casting, and metalwork). Where process might once have been categorized as uniquely wet, dusty, or analog studio play, the process-paradigm has widened to the degree that raw material now includes numbers and vectors as well as paint or welded metal.

The new series *Settings* takes the NO PARKING road sign as its starting point. Immediate graphic communication is the architectural essence of road signs: their message is a first and primary function – go this way, stop here, beware: dog. Yet nested into the public sphere over time they accrue fragments of information, contradictory patterns, or surface interventions that open them up to material collage. Like cultural artifacts they are a quiet canvas for a more unhinged type of mark making: the obscure shadow-play of nightlife, globs of bird shit or chewing gum, busted headlamp residue, lost dog pleas, advertising, and pornography. In *Settings* the toughness of the baked enamel surface has been perverted with process interruptions: the surfaces are sanded, masked, adjusted, airbrushed. In each, deliberate erosion creates a slippage of the NO PARKING function, thus altering the original simplicity of the circle-slash pictogram with a more metaphoric type of weather.

Hung at mirror height, the *Settings* works read as a type of portraiture: polyvocal eyes, heads, or faces, they are watching us as we watch them. Objects from the genre of domestic melodrama (toothpaste, mouse trap, windscreen wiper) are enshrined behind Perspex in small recessed cavities. Like place markers at a table, these utensils are now complicit performers in the watching. Provocatively perfect replicas of their real-life selves, each implies an action – a foaming, a snapping, a killing, an isolating. They amplify the pun of their very existence as signs: take one layer away and beneath it lies yet more language and symbolist instruction.

In the *Empty Every Night* series, a strange dismantling of time occurs. As devotees of the 24/7 mentality of connectedness, we're no longer tied to the binary relationships of light and dark: the Western collision of cyclical concerns (eating, shitting, sleeping, fucking) with the unbroken interface of *transaction* has created a fracture between solid and immaterial.

Like *Settings*, these new works are dioramas of sorts whose snapshot times could mark a point in any number of days. Set inside resin-cast bucket or lamp-shade type forms, numbers of a specific time: 12:59; 06:02; 08:05, etc. are written out in flexed and twisted steel rod mimicking calligraphic form. Their knots and loops are pushed to a point of material discomfort suggestive of the tangles of our own muscle memory, our own brain synapses not quite pulled out of sleep. Like burnt-out neon tubing, these numbers seem yet another cosmic conceit. Perhaps time is a dumb fluidity that needs to be caught like water before it soaks away. Perhaps the bucket is a shade, a roof, or amplifying speaker. Like alarm clocks mocking their own obsessiveness in eking seconds from the day, these works are anxious in their stance, their metrics of volume and audibility perversely tangled.

Hung directly below these clock-like constellations sit individual shelf units that might be categorized as 'bedside table.' Designed like paint trays or dustpans, their lateral forms lie open to catch the bucket drips and emotive run-off from above. On top of each tray sits a precisely machined object in a matching hue. Like motifs extricated from vanitas

painting, these objects are symbols of the transience of our mortal experience. A lemon, a walnut, a bean, a paper roll – they are traces, but absences too.

A new work, *Visitor (39 Gt Jns St)*, carved from solid Hemlock wood sits poised in the doorway. Formally mimicking the proportions of a door wedge, it seems both directional and obdurate. The wedge is not utilitarian but rather carved to replicate the moldings and furniture of the doorway it purports to service: the building number, scaffold supports, chain, and padlock are all worked into the wood surface via carefully chiseled gestures. Like all the works in *Private Road*, *Visitor (39 Gt Jns St)*, is locked in semantic confusion – is it a generous prop to assist or a more silent blockade to breach and limit?

Two final works from a recent series, *Dearest*, take the construction of a ladder as a starting point to explore the idea of the romantic serenade. Objects of surreal figuration, they contain metalwork profiles machined like calligraphic alphabets: the letter 'D' for 'dearest' as well as the enlarged form of a cast resin hat in place of the protagonist. Approximate in proportion to a standing or lying figure, the frameworks are aspirational forms, suggesting physical conveyance from one point to another. Their steps seem on the point of biomorphic dissolve. Affixed to each of the main frameworks is an additional cast object: a petrol can, a boot. Each includes a handmade motif to illustrate a point of intensity within the timescale of the serenade: the flammable intensity of arson or the musical wooing of the literal serenade. Reus' interest in serial and logical systems is pitted against the essential characteristic of all of these objects: that they are sculptural forms, combinations of the semiotic, and the pure material rather than functional apparatus.

Ladders, wedges, alarm clocks, and road signs – these are all provisional items, props in all manifestations of the word: literal, theatrical, physical. Like objects on a charm bracelet, they are metaphorical images for self-improvement and protection. Reus utilizes our emotional and physical connectivity to these objects to enable instances of pause or contradiction where otherwise there would be fluid access: these are all markers on a *Private Road*.

Magali Reus (b.1981, Den Haag, The Netherlands) currently lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include *As mist, description*, South London Gallery, London (2018); *Hot Cottons*, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2017); *Night Plants*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen (2017); *Mustard*, The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016); *Quarters*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2016); *Spring for a Ground*, SculptureCenter, New York; *Particle of Inch*, The Hepworth Wakefield, UK; *Halted Paves*, Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (all 2015). Reus has been included in group exhibitions and screenings at Tate Britain, London; ICA, London; CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson; Kestnergesellschaft, Hanover; LUMA Westbau, Zürich; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporanea, Lisbon; De Appel, Amsterdam; and the British Art Show 8 (touring). Reus was shortlisted for the Hepworth Prize for Sculpture 2018, and was awarded the Prix de Rome 2015. Her work is included in international collections including Tate Collection, UK; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Hessel Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Sarvisalo, New York; Arts Council Collection, UK. She has a forthcoming solo exhibition at Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2020).

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