

Nina K. Ekman & Ania Pieranska

Closer to the Sun

March 31 – May 20, 2023

The duo exhibition *Closer to the Sun* is a bittersweet tribute to a lazy summer's day. Warm skin, cold glasses of wine and prickly cactuses are everywhere to be found at Arden Asbæk Gallery, which has been transformed into what feels like a taverna. The duo exhibition, which presents the work of Polish painter Ania Pieranska and Norwegian visual artist Nina Ekman, encapsulates summer heat, while also questioning the ambivalence of the rising temperatures and the state of the world through the artists' careful and conscious approach to our resources. Warmth, often associated with comfort and indulgence, has in the recent decade grown to symbolize the demise of planetary stability.

Ania Pieranska's paintings show people basking in the sun, charging their bodies like lizards or other cold-blooded creatures, and evening scenes with the slanted yellow lights reflected off the glasses on the café tables. With a background in architecture, the artist has a unique sense of creating worlds as well as an inherent focus on the world around us. Pieranska describes how we – while treating ourselves awfully seriously – often dismiss or even forget other forms of matter and energy. The artist places her new series of works focusing on light in a Dionysian context of eating, drinking, and devouring. Here, sunlight similarly becomes a resource, we consume and metabolize – metaphorically as well as literally – and her work becomes an overindulgent feast of light.

Nina Ekman's fuzzy practice is hard to place as it floats between painting, textile, and sculpture, but always investigating themes such as sustainability, consumption, and the consequences of our planetary negligence. These themes also resonate in Ekman's production as the artist mainly uses excess deadstock yarn from the textile industry to create her pieces. The dilemma of maintaining modern life, while preserving the globe, is a driving force in Ekman's work, and the artist's soft cacti, fragmented structures resembling indigenous totem poles, and her tufted backdrops become poignant reminders that nothing lasts forever. Neither does the summer.

Ania Pieranska is a polish-born painter based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Educated as an architect, with an MA from the Royal Danish Academy of Art and a BA from the University of Art in Poznan, for many years she's been an active member of Copenhagen architecture scene, primarily associated with Cobe architects. In 2020 she diverged her career path towards fine art, opening an art practice in which, through the medium of oil painting, she investigates topics such as the climatic shift, the tension between natural and artificial, as well as more personal topics of shared vulnerability and connection. She debuted in 2021 at a self-initiated duo exhibition 'Something Like a Ritual' held in Nordhavn, Copenhagen.

Nina K. Ekman is a Norwegian visual artist, currently in a 4-year residency studio program at Cubberley in Palo Alto, CA. Ekman is partly self-taught, but has also studied at Parson's School of Art and Design in Paris and Product Design at the Design Academy in the Netherlands as well as at the Atelier Velasco & Meller in Paris. She has a Cand. Psych. from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Ekman has participated in several group shows, including at The 12th from Lausanne to Beijing International Fiber Art Biennale Exhibition, KE20, KP20, Nordic Saloon Socle du Monde Biennale, among others. Ekman has been commissioned for decorating the New Ballet school in Sønderborg and the outdoor textile mural in Brande, as part of the 17 sustainable goals murals in Denmark.