

Esther Kläs

As of Now

5 July – 15 September 2024

Press Release

“Now is life very solid or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on forever; goes down to the bottom of the world—this moment I stand on.”—Virginia Woolf

The title of Esther Kläs’ fourth exhibition with the gallery—*As of Now*—hints at a similar kind of duality, or threshold. Things that are fixed, but which could also shift. A phrase that, on the one hand, means the here and now, but on the other, change and possibility. The idea that, henceforth, things can be different. Today and tomorrow, encapsulated in three brief words.

Esther Kläs’ sculptures are still and restrained but ultimately informed by movement. As is typical of her practice, these are multipartite works in precise spatial configurations. They operate on three levels: the elements are in a relationship with each other, the space, and the dynamic presence of the viewer. *As of Now* showcases the new trajectories in Kläs’ sculptural thinking, most notably an expansion and deepening of her interest in repetition, movement, time, division and difference. *color, 2024* is composed of eight panels. They stand in pairs, arranged by shape and colour, similar yet distinct and recognisable as a group. Leaning against the wall as if waiting, as though they have just been finished, or are in a provisional state. The title ‘color’ is a humorous, self-evident reference that conjures up a sense of belonging.

future/now, 2024 and *reflections, 2024* were aluminium casts from earlier, unused resin sculptures that were subsequently cut into two or three sections. The parts are arranged in the order of cutting, one in front of the other. By reusing or undoing a previous form, the artist questions her own thought-processes. It also engenders change, a re-configuring of a work’s inherent possibilities. Letting the sculpture reflect itself by its own confrontation. The movement of these stable sculptures is multidirectional. *connect, to be, 2024* is the largest work in the exhibition. It consists of two painted canvases, one on the wall and another, smaller one on the floor. The two parts are connected by sticks. The cast canes leaning against the wall seem to correspond with the marks in the work, while intersecting the very similar ones on the floor. Through resemblances and multiplied elements, the artist makes us aware of the detailed complexity in *connect, to be*. Manifesting the link between condition and proposition.

Kläs also debuts *3, 2024*, a new wall-mounted work that combines fabric, a drawing on paper, and vinyl. Here too is the idea of multiplicity, only now approached via layering. A synthesis of individual elements to form a connected whole. Minimal, abstract and sparse, but also colourful, textural and gestural, Kläs’ works resist linear interpretation. One way to view them is as maps and propositions. Abstract records of the creative journey in which only the most essential elements are visible. The artist’s works contain vestiges of the processes involved in their making and they reward careful scrutiny.

Klās' prints and drawings also revolve around motion: marks on paper as the traces of movements and relationships. A schematic index of things that the artist has seen and felt, all visualised with great economy of means. Multiple dashes; concentric and overlapping circles (both broken and whole); verticals, horizontals and diagonals; geometric and organic forms; forceful strokes and tenuous lines: all have an associated gesture, often repeated, sometimes mirrored or inverted. Colours and titles evoke varied associations: mountain, sea, sky, horizon, cloud, moon, horse, dune, dance. All of which demonstrate that this is an abstraction rooted in life, feeling and direct observation. Distilled to its absolute essence. Thoughts crystallised onto paper in a personal, evocative and wholly non-prescriptive way.

As of Now coincides with the publication of *clouds*, a fourteen-year overview of Esther Klās' oeuvre from 2009 to 2023. Conceived by the artist and published by ZOLO Press, the book is available at the gallery.

Esther Klās (b. 1981, Mainz, Germany) lives and works in Barcelona. Recent exhibitions include *Maybe it can be different*, Fondazione Giuliani, Rome, Italy (2020); *The subtle interplay between the I and the me*, Kolumba, Cologne, Germany (2020); *Start*, Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2019); *ola/wave*, Proyecto AMIL, Lima, Peru (2017-2018); *Our Reality*, Fondazione Brodbeck, Catania, Italy (2015-2016); *Whatness*, Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany (2015); *Girare Con Te*, Marino Marini Museum, Florence, Italy (2014); and *Esther Klās: Better Energy*, MoMA PS1, NY, USA (2012).

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