

HELEN FRIK: *THE PLAY*

16 OCTOBER–20 NOVEMBER 2021

We are surrounded by stuff. An ever-increasing mountain of stuff. As it grows, so does our awareness of the funnels and tunnels, chains and pipes through which our multi-origin stuff travels, becomes assimilated and transformed before arriving in 'our' world to fulfil a desire, a need or a want.

Helen Frik's two – and three – dimensional mixed – media sculptures carry the traces and the weight of journeys of desire through lands and oceans that are both uncannily familiar and strange at the same time.

The syntagmatic logic of a Rabelaisian list, or a pataphysical taxonomy of contradictory being, exists in Helen Frik's assemblages, protruding outwards from the purely literary realm. On the stage of a grand history play from a parallel dimension, they are actor, text, set, relic, chant, and drama, telling of conquests and love and betrayal. They are set somewhere between the whimsically domestic and the pathos-laden cosmic. Plays that are unbearably sad, farcical and comic, absurd and sacred, gentle and brutal, conjuring desires and betraying them at once.

"Our art then = a learning how to look at "A" and "B"
and see not them
but a relation
that cannot be "seen"
You can't look at "it" (that relation)
because
it IS the looking itself.

Frik's works construct an audience: relations emerge from a mise-en-scène, frozen in time, jokes that are both build up and punchline at the same time. In Richard Foreman's plays, objects are scattered across the stage, carriers (sign posts) of the not-yet-there, As, Bs, and Cs that are bound to connect to the Ds, Ps, πs and 7s, at which point the 'drama' opens up a different universe. But for now, they 'quiver' with a different 'not-yet-known-how-to-use'. In their stillness, Frik's objects are not waiting to be animated, but carry in them the echo of past histories and anecdotes.

The exhibition *The Play* at Eenwerk brings together four drawings, and three sculptural works, all dialogues between materialities, ideas and feelings that invite the viewer to 'listen in' closely. Incorporating a piece from the Frik Collection, – the artist's own museum and archive – the piece *Hospitality* invites you into her idiosyncratic cosmos, where stuff lies waiting in the wings until it's time to join the action.



FOTO S: PETER COX

HELEN FRIK, SURVIVAL: KEEP ON PUSHING
BLACK PAINTED ALUMINIUM FOIL, DIGITAL IMAGE ON PAPER
83 x 57 x 38