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The Works Don't Gel

A solo exhibition by Nicholas Riis

And then we invited Nathan Azhderian, Bob Eikelboom, Johan Jensen Kjeldsen, Mike Pratt, Felix Salut, Karen Sargsyan, Daniel van Straalen, Nora Turato, Bruno Zhu, and Toto Boroto & The Wildflowers

17 December 2016 - 4 February 2017

This exhibition requires a disclaimer. The works on view don't gel thematically in any other particular manner than their visual presence on, in, and around the sculptures by Scandinavian artist Nicholas Riis. Little snow men, golf sticks, t-shirts, games, stickers, flowers, carpets and many more gently fill the surface of Riis' collision of materials. A melting pot of studio experiments, ready made objects and the tactile and physical possibilities of computer animated sketches. Seemingly heavy though light weighted things that meanwhile serve as props for the works by Nathan Azhderian, Bob Eikelboom, Johan Jensen Kjeldsen, Mike Pratt, Felix Salut, Karen Sargsyan, Daniel van Straalen, Nora Turato and Bruno Zhu. Here Riis' work is activated by - yet activates - the works or objects of others, blurring and fusing concepts of autonomous sculpture, cosplay costume design, and set design.

A stylist's attitude of selecting and arranging objects according to size and material aesthetics, goes hand in hand with difficulties regarding creative curating and a hard core appropriation of other people's work for one's own sake. But Riis is not a curator. Far more the artist is interested in the ambiguousness of objects, and how his work plays a similar role within this setting in the gallery. Here the presence of works by others associatively arose within a collaborative process between the artist and gallerist, likewise Riis joined forces with artists such as Nora Turato before, though not necessarily marks the artist's practice in general.

A 400-page object-only catalog, composed by Riis himself, sets out the starting point for his sculptures. It's a personal sketchbook, that is filled with all sorts of ordinary and peculiar domestic plastic ware, that often literally re- or disappear within his works. For example, knee protectors become pseudo-symbolic decoration, a litter box (or 'kattenbak') appears as a sink in a form that is reminiscent of a kitchen element, and wax sculptures - containing engraved fragments of Matisse's paintings - melt on the spot when the temperature in the gallery climbs up.

The artist deliberately messes around with presumptions of what a sculpture is, can be or should be, and continuously emphasizes the potential (ordinary) functionality of the artistic gesture. A suggestion whereby Riis' work here becomes a décor of display for all other works on top of it. Works that just go well together in a playful sense, without an argument that extends the latter.

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Norwegian/Danish artist Nicholas Riis was born in Denmark in 1987 and currently lives and works in Oslo, NO and Amsterdam, NL. He graduated from Prosjektskolen in Oslo and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and now studies at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam for his Master's degree in Fine Arts. Riis founded project space Kazachenko's Apartment in Oslo, together with Nora Turato, Maarten Sleeuwits and Roderick Hietbrink, he initiates exhibitions and art manifestations that focus on process and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Riis participated in international group exhibitions including *My, My, A Body Does Get Around* at Wilfried Lentz in Rotterdam (2015); *Exhibition at Plato*, Ostrava, CZ (2015); *Lo and behold*, hosted by Juliette Jongma at Manifesta, Amsterdam (2015); and several shows together with artist collective NF, *Vrom Ee toe Bie toe Zie toe Die*, at P/////AKT, Amsterdam and *Kim?*, Riga, LV. This year Riis showed his work *Clean Care* at the online exhibition space *Cosmos Carl - Host by Proxy*.