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CLAUDIA COMTE
La Ligne Claire
Curated by Samuel Leuenberger

Opening September 29, 2017
Till November 30, 2017

BASEMENT ROMA is pleased to present La Ligne Claire, the first solo exhibition of Berlin based artist Claudia Comte in Italy since her residency at Istituto Svizzero in Rome in 2011. It was then that the artist formed some of her first architectural interventions – simple line drawings that were applied to the building's classical columns and faux marble paintings that were inspired by St. Peter's Basilica's ornate floor. Onwards, Comte delved into a rigorous research practice based on reduction and simplification, which has come to define her signature hand-carved wooden sculptures, hard-edged and shaped canvases and digitally translated polished marbles.

In La Ligne Claire the gallery space is transformed into a grid of lines and patterns. In an overarching black and white arrangement, wall paintings are splattered, sprayed, painted and stencilled against all the available surfaces as if to test the limit of a limitless medium, breaking styles and temporal references, while two large-scale, diamond shaped canvases, concentric circles painted in a smooth monochromatic gradient hue, partially cover these ambitious wall paintings. In sections, plinths protrude outwards as if to cut out from the wall itself, extending the mural painting into a third-dimension; they act as sumptuous platters on which three starfish sculptures sit. These marine invertebrates are an exquisite predator, that have complex life cycles. While they can reproduce both sexually and asexually, they lay here heavy, cast in marble – fulfilling simple axioms of geometry, rendering nature's geometric matrix visible.

Simeon Nelson, Professor of sculpture at the University of Hertfordshire wrote: 'Pattern can be discerned at all scales that exist between the infinitesimal and the infinite. We humans oddly seem to occupy nearly the mid point in this scale, which has been commented on as a new type of anthropocentrism. Humans (and to varying extents other living creatures) have an inborn and intense predisposition to perceive, represent and create pattern to make sense of a perilous and confusing world around us. We have a primordial awareness of pattern to make sense of our place in the scheme of things and to make meaning and purpose out of our finite and limited existence. Pattern is both a function of our perception and an attribute of the world. The entire cosmos could be said to be an eternally unfolding sequence of patterns.'

Comte's work evidences a dynamic mutability between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space as exemplified in her ever-evolving lines and patterns and immersive site-specific installations. For *La Ligne Claire*, Comte introduces new meaning to Formalism, sourcing original uses for geometric and organic forms which continuously challenge the limits of abstraction. It is worth bearing in mind that Comte's line isn't concerned with tracing the custom of form in an art-historical context, but performs more like a vector, transiting through linear, bi-dimensional and tri-dimensional space. The mutable quality of the line defuses the tension between high sincerity and low lightness.

CLAUDIA COMTE (b.1983, Switzerland) is based in Berlin and Grancy. Comte is best known for her site-specific installations, featuring wooden sculptural forms set against graphic, abstract wall paintings. Comte creates a unique, rule-based measurement system for each new body of work so that every piece relates to a particular scale. Despite such regimented schemes, Comte's pieces are imbued with a sense of playfulness, humor and irreverence, puncturing the solemn atmosphere connected with minimalism.

Selected solo and group shows include: NO LEMON NO MELON, Gladstone Gallery, New York, (2015); Easy Heavy III, Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2014), Sharp Sharp, David Dale Gallery, Glasgow (2014), If I were a rabbit, where would I keep my gloves?, BolteLang, Zurich (2013); Scantione-Tensione, Swiss Institute of Rome, Rome (2011); Elevation 1049, curated by Neville Wakefield, Gstaad (2013); Post-Op. Perceptual Gone Painterly / Du perceptuel au pictural. 1958 – 2014, curated by Matthieu Poirier, Galerie Perrotin, Paris (2013).

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