

L'INCONNUE
presents "Ancient
Tongues," a group
exhibition featuring artists Birke
Gorm, Clémence de La Tour du Pin,
Gretta Johnson, and Tanja Nis-Hansen.
The exhibition will be on view opening July
22 - August 27, 2021.

ANCIENT TONGUES

July 22 - September 10, 2021

Birke Gorm, Clémence de La Tour du Pin,
Gretta Johnson, Tanja Nis-Hansen

In her new series of jute works titled *Huswifs* (Middle English for, 'housewife');, (2021-): Birke Gorm focuses on the traditional character of the bag and addresses the constructed, binary gender disparity with regard to men's and women's clothing. She draws attention to how the manufacturing, production and circulation of everyday objects in modern Western societies have constructed a patriarchal gender hierarchy of privileges and discriminations. Women often carried the entirety of their possessions in their bags tied around their hips. In contrast to the pockets embedded in men's clothing, which were (and for the most part still are) located directly on the man's body, women's possessions were attached to the body. Pockets thus constitute a suitable metaphor for privilege: unnoticed by those who possess them, their non-possession signifies a restriction and disadvantage in terms of the possibilities of participation and activity in social life. As Silvia Federici explains, the emergence of the concept of private property was the pre-condition for monogamy: a system in which men could earn, own, and inherit and women could not. Their lack of access to means of subsistence due to violent role models made them increasingly dependent on others in capitalist development.¹

Clémence de La Tour du Pin's work *Pale Junk* (2020) encased in a metal structure contains welded spirals forms. Motifs reminiscent of balconies and urban fences are used to brace stretched fabric residues, threads, metal trinkets, and wallpaper. These ancient leftovers - an old flowery wallpaper, a red altar-boy belt fragment, a pink laced infant robe, and a white plastron were collected from a dilapidated family house in France prior to its subsequent renovation and sale. Material objects collected and acquired to fill one's private spaces can reveal a history of the possessor's desire. And thus by incorporating these into her work, the artist retools the materials' relevancy into a contemporary relic.

Gretta Johnson's paintings embody multiple identities, pushing and pulling themselves between abstraction and figuration with an elemental palette. *Chaotic Gates*' (2020) completion was the day before Johnson departed her home in New York for a period of time due to the looming shutdown. Depicted is a threshold space holding a revolving fan/flower, kicking around tiny spheres, shielding the passageway, yet porously leaking some through. The frame around the large central form is not typical of her work - graphic, carnivalesque and fear-provoking. The yellow floral motif is found both in *Chaotic Gate* (2020) and *Drain* (2019). An iconography included in Johnson's work for the past few years. In *Drain* (2019) the flower's form is simultaneously utilitarian and frivolous. Its delicacy is challenged through numerous punctures yet structurally supporting an ethereal scroll at its center, revealing a wet chamber at its base and the water reflection echoing the flower above. *Nodes* (2020) carries a sonic inspiration, the quiet sound of an egg cracking underwater, sharing a tight space between the circulating nodes. An illegible scribble oozes out of the egg into the body of water.

Tanja Nis-Hansen's *I'm a patient girl* (2020) and *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (2020), examine systemic expectations of productivity enforced upon the female body. As a result feminine bodies are anxiety ridden and in Nis-Hansen's role as an artist, continuously pressurized to birth new ideas. The experience of childbirth paired with the biological clock are steeped in this influence. In *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (2020) 'Time' is giving birth to the artist's crowning adult head. Fear of its overpowering presence is reflected in her outward gaze veered towards the viewer. The walls surrounding the birthing bed swirl in distortion, as the canvas above the bed remains blank. In *I'm a*

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patient girl

(2020) time is represented cyclically in the canvas' circular form, quantified in clockwise numerics and figuratively with an orbital blue glowing face grinning near Cheshire-like. The construct, abstraction and destruction of time is poked and probed in the stagnant clock's hands.

Ancient tongues' derives from the limitations of language to convey freedom. Language confines time, dictates possession and defines the body. Non-lingual images and materials fill the curvilinear walls of the gallery like a tongue tied and twisted forcing the viewer to swallow their relationship to these indulgent ancient structures.

CLÉMENCE DE LA TOUR DU PIN (born in 1986, France) lives and works between Paris & Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include Femtensesse, Oslo (2021); 15 Orient at Balice Hertling, Paris (2020) and 1857, Oslo (2017). Group exhibitions include Centre d'art contemporain - la synagogue de Delme, France (2019); Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Switzerland (2019); Dortmunder Kunstverein, Germany (2017); Salts, Basel (2015) and Musée d'Art Moderne de La Ville de Paris (2015). This autumn, La Tour du Pin will exhibit at Smart Objects, Los Angeles, a group exhibition at Hagiwara Projects, Tokyo and present a performance at CAPC-Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux.

TANJA NIS-HANSEN (b. 1988, Faxe, Denmark) lives and works in Berlin. She studied in Copenhagen and Vienna before achieving both her BFA (2016) and MFA (2018) at the Academy of Fine Arts, Hamburg under the supervision of professor Jutta Koether. She has had solo exhibitions at Sans Titre (2016), Paris (2019), Sydhavn Station, Copenhagen (2019), at Come Over chez Malik's, Hamburg (2017) and at the Golden Pudel Club, Hamburg (2015). Recent group exhibitions include SORT, Vienna (2019), Crum Heaven, Stockholm (2019), Rumpelstiltskin, New York (2018), Kunsthau Hamburg (2018), Galleria Federico Vavassori, Milan (2018), Münchener Kammerspiele, Munich (2018), the Institut Kunst, Basel (2018) and Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg (2017). She was awarded a travel grant by Neue Kunst Hamburg for her performative collaboration CONNY together with Niclas Riepshoff in 2020 and a work grant by the Danish Art Council in 2019.

BIRKE GORM (b. 1986, Hamburg, Germany), lives and works in Vienna, Austria. Studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and painting at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg. Gorms' work has been exhibited in shows such as Achterl (Gabi +, Vienna, 2020), common crazies (Croy Nielsen, Vienna, 2020), On the New - Young Scenes in Vienna (Belvedere21, Vienna, 2019), Whistle and I'll Come to You (Galerie der Stadt Schwaz, Tyrol, 2018), IOU (Croy Nielsen, Vienna, 2017), CONDO (Bodega, New York, 2017) and Gebärden und Ausdruck (Halle für Kunst Lüneburg, 2016).

GRETTA JOHNSON, Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include a show of new paintings at Paris London Hong Kong (Chicago) and "Jackets/ Machines/Hair" at Feuer/Mesler (New York), as well as a solo project with Lucy Bull (Los Angeles). Her work has also been recently exhibited at Rachel Uffner Gallery, Safe Gallery, and The Green River Project, among other locales. Johnson also collaborates with Grimm Artisanal Ales to design an on-going series of otherworldly labels.

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gallery hours
Wed - Fri 12pm - 6pm

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