

Charlotte Leimer, "Sacred Relations", 19.12.2020–10.4.2021

An industrial garage in the middle of the mountains, a place of artistic expression. Filled with stone sculptures, wire and plaster mobiles formulating clouds, shadows moving as the Maloja wind enters through the garage door. Nature, philosophical questions such as communication, relationship towards mother figures, language and cycles are the essence of Leimer's artistic expression. Situated by the lake of Sils, Leimer's practice uses local materials and the space of the environment to give birth to and foster these investigations.

Leimer's newest series of works 'Sacred Relations' began during the Spring lockdown in Switzerland. She observed a herd of Cows with their calves in the fields; tagged, fenced, ready to be milked or processed. Leimer sensed the presence of unconditional love, one found amongst animals and sometimes humans. This sacred love started to foster as a form of spirit and exploration into her new works. In her own words "The body of the cow, or the body of the mother, the thing observed in the present, should be pushed just beyond that, to explore what lingers underneath the surface of these relations. It is an attempt to expose the ultimate space inhabited by the role of the mother, that is then challenged by the means of unconditional love".

These abstract works, inhabiting this third space that is neither sculpture nor painting, spawn from watercolours on paper that the artist constructed from memory after her visits to the fields. Creating abstract bodily landscapes inevitably leave the cow undetected. Ever-present in Leimer's work, the subject becomes unnoticed, "as the scene unfolded before my eyes, it only made sense to me to trigger similar challenging feelings with the viewer, to force them to confront their own truths through the exploration of the abstract".

Sturdy but soft, somewhat representative of the uncanny scarecrow, an abandoned field, a lonely farmer trapped in labour by a vast landscape, a lost cow in the woods, now... a motionless furry object. The burlap drinks the paint, representative of the nourishment provided by the mother to her child. The wooden frames, unvarnished, raw, splintered, act as a boundary - entrapping the scene and violently containing the conversation.

Leimer stands at 5"3, pushing her physical limits: rotating these large canvases in an attempt to exert control through the manipulation of gravity. The paint drips with a milk-like consistency and splits the canvas, forming an uncomfortable composition. The rawness of the construction of the work is an attempt to represent the forced movement of cows. The push we may experience in life. Free in a field, but trapped by a fence.

It is revelatory when Leimer talks of her paintings. She talks of nurturing them, she bravely exposes them to different environments, she fears abandoning them, she experiments manipulating and controlling them, like a mother with her offspring. Knowingly or not, she perpetuates the inevitable dilemma of the mother and child relationship.

Born in 1995 in Hong Kong, Swiss artist Charlotte Leimer has lived in London, Madrid, Zurich and Mexico. The artist has strong personal ties to the Engadin Valley, where she currently lives and works. Leimer is enrolled in a Masters of Fine Arts program at The Parsons School of Design in New York.