

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Claudia Comte

NO MELON NO LEMON

530 West 21st Street, New York

January 29 – March 21, 2015

Opening January 28, 6 – 8 pm

It's a hot summer day in the southern part of Italy. Clouds blow by; the thermostat glows red at its tip. The horizon shakes unevenly, like a bleak, overexposed line. It hurts to focus your eyes on it. In the dryness and the sweltering heat you recognize the objects around you only by their outlines, which repeat themselves beyond your view. NO MELON NO LEMON is the supreme palindrome. It is dry wood in the shape of olive trees, dark burnt earth around them. No citrus fruits, no water vessel in sight—just the echo of the shapes. NO MELON NO LEMON is the repeating sound in your head as you read the same meaning backwards and forwards.

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present Claudia Comte's first U.S. solo exhibition. The Swiss artist will create a site-specific environment comprising paintings and chainsaw-cut sculptures. Each work functions as part of a modular system of intricately connected elements. Arranged in a rhythmic, mathematical manner, they become an immersive space where forms repeat in delirious, self-referencing patterns.

Comte's wood sculptures have subtly recognizable forms, simultaneously reminiscent of classical sculptures and cartoon figures. Through their soft curves they take on anthropomorphic qualities that suggest they are actually characters—rebellious protagonists in the middle of a large, organized choir; troublemakers dancing out of line while the music pumps out a rhythmic beat.

Comte's sculptures sit on plinths that appear to have folded out from the walls. Their heights and depths are exaggerated almost to comedic effect: some extend nearly to the ceiling; others are low to the ground and cut through large expanses of the space. The lines that the plinths create are mirrored by additional lines carved into them and by vertical stripes which are painted on the walls and on circular canvases. These painted stripes toy with each other: sometimes matching each other's rhythms, other times bisecting each other at ninety degrees, creating syncopation, and their own sequential system. Repetitions with subtle variations are a leitmotif in Comte's work, which she uses to activate historical references and modern art codes.

The title of the exhibition is a direct response to repetitive gesture. Like the exhibition itself, *NO MELON NO LEMON* can be read backwards and forwards, so that neither the beginning nor the end nor the entry point is apparent. Each element is interconnected and dependent on each other, and each feels as if it could be repeated endlessly. The repetition and intersection of the lines become a pattern—the pattern becomes a grid and the grid becomes a matrix. It is within this matrix that all of the three-dimensional forms are built: organic, abstract sculptures standing in direct confrontation with their linear surroundings. Ultimately, there is harmony: between the wooden panels (left in a raw state, roughly cut and burnt dark), the wall painting (rigid and perfectly executed, bright and glowing), and the sculptures (impure in form and yet meticulously polished).

It's hot and captivating; it's a volcano waiting to erupt. It's 100 degrees and the ice cream has melted.

Comte was born in Grancy, Switzerland, and now lives and works in Berlin. She has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland; Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris; and the Swiss Institute of Rome, Rome. She has also been included in group exhibitions at Kunsthaus Glarus, Glarus, Switzerland; Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau, Switzerland; *Elevation 1049*, Gstaad, Switzerland; and at SALTS, Basel, Switzerland.

Victor Man

515 West 24th Street, New York

Through April 18, 2015

For further information, please contact Ariel Hudes

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New York gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm, Saturday, 12pm – 6pm