

Press Release

Natasha Rosling Foreign Bodies

September 9 until October 17, 2010
Private View: Wednesday 8 September, 6 – 9 PM

Hidde van Seggelen Gallery is pleased to announce the forthcoming exhibition by Natasha Rosling (London, 1985) - her first major solo presentation in the UK. Constructed within the new gallery, Rosling has integrated the wooden roof structure as a rack from which her large-scale structures dissect and hover above the ground.

Over the recent years Rosling has produced installations internationally; in China at OCAT Center of Contemporary Art with Vision Forum; Sculpture Space, Utica, United States; Badjidala Centre of Contemporary Art, Mali; European Ceramic Work Centre, Den Bosch, The Netherlands; W139, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

... Newly arrived and quite ignorant of the languages of Levant, Marco Polo could express himself only by drawing objects from his baggage – drums, salt fish, necklaces of warthogs' teeth – and pointing to them with gestures, leaps, cries of wonder or of horror...

In each sculpture different forms, materials and processes present themselves, derived from the work's specific cultural locale. Underlying these context-specific concerns is Rosling's fascination with how the human body negotiates the world – its mysterious entwining of a present, physical space with personal and culturally mediated memories – and how the bold, formal qualities of her sculptures both belong to this everyday world and, through their embeddedness with a history of post-war sculpture, reflect upon it at a remove.

Of the works's formal qualities and position within the history of sculpture one could say much – one might comment on the co-existence of violent tension with an appreciation of beauty bordering on the tranquil; on how a work's materials remain defiantly what they are whilst being something one never thought they could be; on the ambiguous forms which never seem abstractly remote but over-loaded with shadows of specific visual references, etc., etc. – but at the same time one wouldn't have said much at all. Nothing very important. Nothing as succinct as the work. It is not that language isn't an important frame of the work; it's just not one the artist chooses. Possibly a parallel literary allusion is appropriate.

The above quotation is taken from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* – ostensibly a collection of described cities narrated by Marco Polo to Kublai Khan. Although initially confined to props and gestures Polo soon learns to speak:

...but you would have said communication between them was less happy than in the past: to be sure, words were more useful than objects and gestures in listing the most important things in every province – monuments, markets, costumes, fauna and flora – and yet when Polo began to talk about how life must be in those places, day after day, evening after evening, words failed him, and little by little, he went back to relying on gestures, grimaces, glances

Like the Venetian, Rosling's work presents the viewer with a crystallisation of experience as eloquent and affecting as it is mute and material. And in the continuities connecting her works – her formal language, if you like – we find a parallel to Calvino's conundrum of faithfully narrating experience: for, city after city, year after year, an image emerges from the multitude of cities Polo conjures:

*"Sire, now I have told you about all the cities I know."
"There is still one city of which you never speak."*

Marco Polo bowed his head.

"Venice," the Khan said.

Marco smiled. "What else do you believe I have been talking to you about? Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice... To distinguish the other cities' qualities, I must speak of a first city which remains implicit."



Natasha Rosling: *Behind the Scenes*, 2010, Sculpture Space, Utica, New York, USA

It is here that Rosling diverges from Polo, for her work, with so much of contemporary culture, is haunted precisely by this lack of any stable first ground [sic], of anywhere one can identify with as 'home'. It is this lack – an ambivalent blessing and curse – which confers upon the work its poignancy and, possibly, its hopefulness.

"Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears... You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours... Or the question it asks you, forcing you to answer."

For further information
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Gallery opening hours:
Wed – Sat, 12 – 6 pm.

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