

Tinka Pittoors

Galerie La Forest Divonne is exhibiting new sculptures and drawings by Antwerp-based sculptor Tinka Pittoors (1977). Titled *Daphne and me*, this exhibition takes the myth of Daphne, the ancients' #MeToo tale, as its starting point. Struck by Cupid's leaden arrow, this virgin nymph cannot possibly return Apollo's obsessive love. To shake him off for good, her father the river god turns her into a laurel tree. In Pittoors' exhibition plants and vines visibly encircle, entangle, and inhabit manmade structures such as gridded towers, disembodied shoes, glass globes, and classical columns. Mythology immobilized Daphne into a tree, yet here she is a force of nature.

Pittoors is best known for elaborate table-top assemblages that feature colourful everyday objects inhabiting complicated structures in epoxy and ceramics, yet she also creates geometrical drawings that render expansive, lively 3-D scenes. She also constructs immersive environments, seemingly inspired by retail display, as well as glorious 'sprawls,' scattered scenes of otherwise disjointed things joined together more by formal familiarities than glue. And sometimes she plants large-scale versions of her unusual assemblages outdoors to furnish startling public monuments.

Although the formal properties of Pittoors' works visibly grab viewers' attentions first, upon closer inspection, one soon grasps her sculptures' underlying contents; whether insufficient urban greenspace, human beings' lack of respect for nature, exposés on socio-economic

oppression and repression, incessant mass consumerist society, or animals' apparently innate fascination with colourful trinkets. Most importantly, her work frames visual pleasure as the double-edged sword pushing people to purchase unnecessary stuff in order to overcome some overwhelming sense of powerlessness.

If Pittoors' oeuvre makes one overarching remark, it is the tendency for 'shopping wellbeing' to run amok. Studies show that shopping wellbeing is dominated more by hedonic values than utilitarian ones, yet in the world of art hedonic highs are surprisingly few and far between and sometimes difficult to attain. Moreover, artists slogging out this rocky terrain are unlikely to hit pay dirt. To accommodate art lovers' critical edge, their uncanny desire for all things difficult, puzzling, and even repulsive, Tinka Pittoors knocks it up a couple of notches, ratcheting up the hedonic highs until they come crashing down. Suddenly, her compositions' overall visual impact intersects some imaginary baseline, where her sculptures actually risk disgusting viewers. It is a complicated methodology, but it achieves its purpose, aesthetic restraint akin to Brechtian 'alienation'.

Tinka Pittoors, *Daphne and me*, until 19 October, Galerie La Forest Divonne, rue de l'Hôtel des Monnaies 66, Brussels, open Tue-Sat 11 am-7 pm, www.galerielaforestdivonne.fr

Image: Tinka Pittoors, exhibition view *Daphne and me*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, photo Tinka Pittoors

