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AN ECCENTRIC IN THE ECCENTRICS: TORI WRÅNES

By Katy Diamond Hammer — January 31, 2016



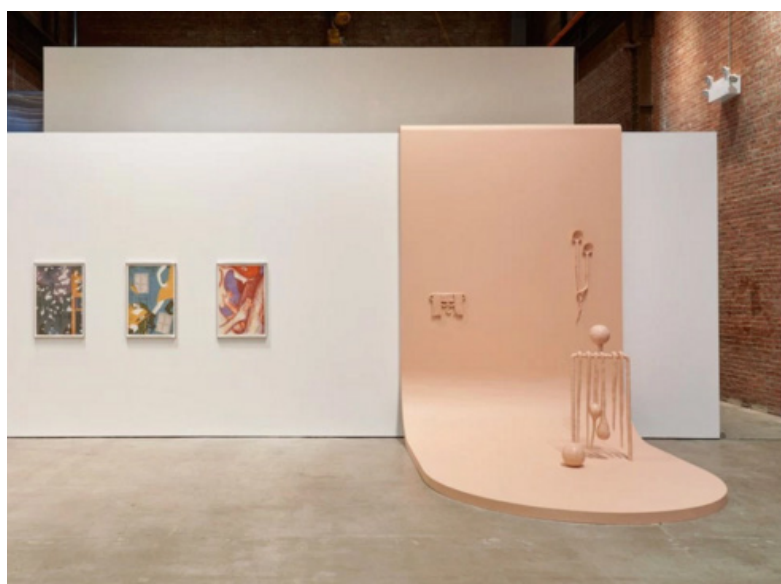
“The Eccentrics”, Installation view, SculptureCenter, NY, 2016. Photo: Kyle Knodell, Courtesy of the Sculpture Center, 2016

Sculpture can be whatever you want it to be. Curated by **Ruba Katrib** at the **Sculpture Center** in Long Island City, “**The Eccentrics**” flattens sculpture, animates sculpture and has also brought it to life. A group show featuring work by **Sanya Kantarovsky, Adriana Lara, Ieva Miseviciute, Eduardo Navarro, Jeanine Oleson, Georgia Sagri, Zhou Tao, and Tori Wrånes**, each artist is represented in the gallery and four of the eight will be doing performance. Such was the case opening night with Norwegian artist **Tori Wrånes**. She is a multidisciplinary artist working in a variety of media, but could, for all intense purposes, be considered a sculptor. Wrånes sculpts personalities, playful, serious, active and passive. For her performance on the opening night, she transformed herself into a troll. Using sculpted hands (made from the molded hand of a stranger) and a molded facial extension—including hairline and wispy long hair—the figure who emerged on a hoverboard encircling the audience, was no longer Wrånes, but a creature from another time, another place. Not necessarily a specific gender, the character floated through the gallery, before addressing those present by singing into a microphone disguised as a small log. The troll sang in a universal tongue, that of rhythm and pitch. A bulbous nose, cratered skin, rounded cheeks, the ears were the artist’s own evident by a gold hoop earring dangling from the inside crevice. This small detail functioned as a reminder to the person inside the troll, or rather, hinting that every troll might just be a person. The performance was brief, but distinct and left those present wanting more. Wrånes has a way of exploding onto a scene, and in this case also expanding above. High in the rafters of the **Sculpture Center**, dangling legs were exposed as the troll addressed the audience. A spotlight shown on the swinging limbs forcing those present to look up. In the succinct duration of time needed for the performance, the artist managed to populate the entire expanse of the venue, physically (by movement), audibly (by sound) and spatially (by placing a figure at the highest point of elevation causing an upward gaze). As sculpture, the dialogue becomes about the concept of the stagnant (troll) brought to life and the invisible (sound) occupying space. Of the many definitions that Merriam-Webster lists for the word sculpture, one that seems to make the most sense in this instance is, Full Definition of SCULPTURE (2): a three-dimensional work of art (as a statue). Is the term ‘statue’

even relevant in contemporary art? There are no statues in the sculpture center, however there are forms that exist in various states of dimensionality. Covering all the new ways of seeing, **“The Eccentrics”** incorporates painting, installation, video, two-dimensional surfaces and yes, performance. In a conversation with **Ruba Katrib** at the home of Elin Bergithe Rognlie Norway’s Consul General in New York prior to the opening, **Tori Wrånes** stated, “I’ve been interested in trolls for quite a while. We have a lot of trolls in Norway for sure, but I think there are a lot of trolls even here in New York. As we try to present the best sides of ourselves all the time, the troll somehow has the volume up on the element of personality. I’ve been working with a troll language. I think there is so much hierarchy in language, as an example, now, I’m talking in English and I wish I could say, “hooooori beetlebeetle bim ooh ooh ooh.” It would better explain what I am trying to say and what I am working with. But instead I have to use words that are really like [sculptural] ‘ready-mades’. The troll language is a very generous language, about rhythm, forms, temperatures and emotions. It is a way of communicating that is accessible to everyone. You can travel around the whole world and be able to communicate with anyone.”

Continuing on **“Double Vision” (2016)** kinetic, gymnast rings installed from the ceiling and **“Tennis Cat” (2015)** a set of legs, clothed in bright blue pants and red shoes but with a hat and long braided hair sans torso, two free-standing sculptures in the exhibition the artist said, “I love to create realities outside the standard and try to expand on what’s [considered] ok or expected. You can make anything become truth if you just mean it enough. I guess it’s just about making new truths, similar to how a lot of artists work. By putting together things that don’t normally belong, suddenly your brain needs to think in a new way. It’s a form of playing. I often work with sound in space and while this sculpture (“Double Vision”) doesn’t have sound, it still operates high up. I think it’s so weird that we walk at a maximum of two meters (six and a half feet) and we just walk around and there’s all this space above us. It’s almost as if the space is speaking saying ‘oh take me!’ and my instinct is to go there. The **Sculpture Center** has lovely high ceilings and I wanted to have something vibrate up there. While the rings move without a person, the viewer is left wondering if there was a ghost or if someone recently left [and they are swinging as a result of that]. Sound can be physical but objects can have the same property or possibilities to vibrate the air or activate the space. Even without actual sound, movement has a way of activating the air.”

The other successful works in the show include a 2015 animated video and painting by **Sanya Kantarovsky** titled **“Happy Soul”** and a large sculpture installed partially on the far wall and floor, titled **“Tongue PhD (Hardcover)”** by **Ieva Miseviciute**, 2016, shown above. In Kantarovsky’s piece, a painting of a male, standing nude in partial profile, hangs on the wall, while an animation, perfectly choreographed and placed, dances and interacts with the painting both spatially and thematically. It’s really quite masterful. Miseviciute’s ‘tongue’ functions as the ‘Eccentric’ anchor. It feels as if it’s a large, gummed object but is in actuality, consists of ceramic, Dragon Skin (high performance platinum cure liquid silicone), wood and paint. The spatial relationships of the objects placed on top of the smoothed surface, along with the minimal monochromatic ground, together make what feels like a micro-world unto itself. If flattened, the piece would be a painting, and as a free-standing object it is both baffling and beautiful.



“The Eccentrics”, Installation view (Left: Sanya Kantarovsky, “Wrong Currency (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)” 2015, Right: Ieva Miseviciute, “Tongue PhD (Hardcover)”, 2016), SculptureCenter, NY, 2016. Photo: Kyle Knodell, Image courtesy of the Sculpture Center, 2016



Performance by Tori Wrånes as part of “The Eccentrics” at the Sculpture Center, NY, Credit: Joanne O’Connor, Courtesy of Sculpture Center, 2016