



## PRESS RELEASE

**SOLO SHOW** HANNE LYDIA OPØIEN FIGENSCHOU  
**TWISTED**

5 NOVEMBER – 23 DECEMBER 2023



*'Made in Norway' by Hanne Lydia Opøien Figenschou, 2019, coloured pencil on black paper, 205x152 cm*

Husk Gallery is delighted to present 'Twisted', the inaugural solo show with Norwegian artist Hanne Lydia Opøien Figenschou (b 1964) in its gallery space. The exhibition features her recent drawings on black paper in various sizes, all meticulously drawn with coloured pencils. Each drawing represents an inanimated contemporary object functioning as a shifting signifying system, and also expressing Figenschou's recurrent interest in the public versus the intimate. In 'Twisted' she focuses on themes of identity, tourism and pandemic life by turning them inside out.

Over the course of years, Figenschou is creating a body of work – consisting of video, prose and drawing – with recurrent motives and thematic cross-references. The selected drawings from her recent and/or ongoing series (Travel Drawings / Kohort, The Collection, and The Corona Files) offer an excellent introduction to the artist's underlying narratives. Blowups imagining a pair of socks, knitting pins or (details of) wool sweaters without context, at first sight objects alluding to something without movement as contemporary reinventions of the still life genre. Like 16th- and 17th Dutch and Flemish old masters, Figenschou re-animates contemporary objects through time-consuming techniques. In her 'trompe-l'oeil' drawings she turns them into a subject, reflecting our social reality and consumerist society. Her drawings are based on snapshots taken with a smartphone. From a distance, the drawings may seem relatively photorealistic, but close inspection reveals that they are made up of rough elements.



*'Have a Nice Day' by Hanne Lydia Opøien Figenschou, 2017, coloured pencil on black paper, 110x75 cm*

### ***The tourist turned inside out***

Figenschou states that it is possible to become a tourist in one's own life. Her 'Travel drawings' include souvenir objects like Icelandic sweaters or a 'Made in Norway' labeled hat, all of them sourced from various personal travels by the artist. By literally turning them inside out, she unravels their fake authenticity as a tourist industry's trap. Figenschou evokes that there is something naive and greedy about tourism, among others by referring to many tourists' lack of interest in anything but souvenirs and events. She depicts how we market ourselves through travelling around, critically considering our use of objects as genuine representations of cultural identity.

### ***Twisting the self into a ghost***

In her previous works, the masked self-portrait has been a recurring theme with reference to the strategies various cultures employ for expressing identity through covering or uncovering the body. The approach can be seen as expressing the need to claim ownership of the self-portrait, which throughout art history has been the dominion of men. In 'The Collection' series she removed the human figure in some drawings so that only clothes and accessories testified to the bodily absence, as if these objects act as a stand-in or cast for the self. Other drawings feature a vast landscape with loners or traces of feet in the snow, as a subtle reminder of their physical presence.

### ***Objects become subjects***

These absent subjects re-occur in 'The Corona Files', one of Figenschou's recent drawing series in which she explores and visualizes the subjective experience of living as a single during a pandemic. By documenting the company of a sweater, her books or a cushion, they become signifiers of a standstill travel through insecurity, loneliness, fear and conspiracy theories. By staging her identity through the representation of isolated objects, the private becomes the public. Figenschou 'draws' her personal experience into the social arena, once again mingling art and life and addressing issues of representation and identity at times of global social isolation.



*'Sitting Ghost' by Hanne Lydia Opøien Figenschou, 2021, coloured pencil on black paper, 50x50 cm*



## About the artist

Over the course of years, **Hanne Lydia Opøien Figenschou** is creating a body of work – consisting of video, prose and drawing – with recurrent motives and thematic cross-references. The artist explores themes of gender and identity, violence in close relationships, the self-portrait, tourism, feminism, abortion and the intimate. Text is often employed in installations, video work, performances and also published in books. She is renowned for her 'trompe l'oeil' drawings on black paper in various sizes, all meticulously created with coloured pencils. Among others, she draws blowups imagining single objects, as contemporary reinventions of the still life genre.

## Short CV



**Hanne Lydia Opøien Figenschou** (b. 1964, Trondheim, Norway) grew up in Tromsø, above The Arctic Circle. She now lives and works in Oslo and Tromsø. She studied at Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, Norway, and The University of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm, Sweden. Figenschou has had a large number of exhibitions, and has won several significant awards for her works. She received a prestigious ten-year Working Grant from The Norwegian Arts Council (2015). Her works have been purchased by several influential Art Institutions, among them The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Norway and Shaanxi Museum of Fine Arts, Xi'an, China. She contributed artwork to the cruise ships Viking Octantis and Viking Polaris (2021 and 2022). She attended a residency in Roma, Circolo Scandinavo (2016) and she stayed in Paris, France, at Cité internationale des Arts, a residency made possible by Ingrid Lindbäck Langgaards Foundation, NO (2022).

From 13 October 2023 until 31 March 2024 she is presented with a large-scale work titled 'Falling Heroes' in The National Museum, Norway, as a part of The Drawing Triennial.

[Download her full cv on her artist's page](#)

### Opening

Sunday 5 November 2023 from 2 to 7 pm in the presence of the artist

### Rivoli Open Sunday

1 December 2023 from 2 to 6 pm

### Opening hours during exhibition

Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 2 to 6 pm or by appointment

### For further inquiries:

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