

marguo

Press Release

FAWN ROGERS COME RUIN OR RAPTURE

16 October - 18 November 2023
Galerie Marguo, 4 rue des Minimes, 75003 Paris



Galerie Marguo is pleased to present *Come Ruin or Rapture* by American artist Fawn Rogers, the second iteration of a two-part presentation, which opened this summer as the solo exhibition *Burn, Glean, Shine* at K11 MUSEA in Hong Kong. This exhibition, which marks the artist's debut exhibition in Europe, opens on 16 October during Paris+ par Art Basel week, and will be on view until 18 November 2023.

In her most personal show to date, Fawn Rogers is returning to these childhood memories, exploring how they continue to influence her practice two decades on. Writer Michael Slenske writes of Fawn Rogers' solo exhibition:

Never Risk a Shell for a Pearl

As a child Fawn Rogers lived in the woods in Medford, Oregon with her mother in a bohemian commune that drew water from the Rogue River and sourced food from the land and government subsidies. Her mother was a born-again Christian who used to tell Rogers that the rapture was coming and she would be left behind with the sinners. "A bar of gold won't buy a loaf of bread", she warned Rogers, who would be brought to tears thinking she had been left behind, "It happened", she would yell to the empty forest if she ever arrived home alone. "It really scared the shit out of me" recalls Rogers. "Eventually I realized it couldn't happen because I didn't believe in her god."

Despite these doomsday declarations, Rogers also remembers the bucolic folly of her childhood, playing in a sprawling field of tall grass beside her grandmother's house off the Oregon coast. She would close her eyes and run with reckless abandon through the tall blades, squishing her feet in the clover, falling into this living canvas again and again.

Grass is resilient, it will grow anywhere, breaking through any patch of concrete or expanse of asphalt, enveloping everything in its path. This breathing blanket is a sense memory device on par with the Proustian

madeleine, and one that the Los Angeles-based artist is thirsty for in this moment when wildfires and drought are ravaging every green space on the planet.

"I'd stay there late into the night with a sense of freedom in the dark, in the dew, and that primal, lush carpet surrounded by burnt, crushed cars and horses," says Rogers, noting these wild grasses also blanketed a neighboring junkyard filled with abandoned automobiles that were sold for scrap, many punctured by mature ash and maples growing through their windows or trunks. Wild horses roamed the coastline, and children were free to run with them. The touch, the sight, the smell of these romantic idylls recalls a proximity to a bygone wilderness, and wildness that is quickly going extinct as pleasure junkies and corporate raiders, your friends and neighbors, are hastening the demise of Mother Earth. This collision of childhood references and real-world destruction forms the crux of Rogers' multimedia artistic practice, which operates on the razor's edge between the sublime and the abyss.

As with all of Rogers' work, this exhibition begins with a two-channel video, *Contemporary Eve*, which serves as the artist's notes or sketchpad for the show. Footage of nature prevailing over junkyards oscillates with clips of cars crashing into one another, being crushed by hydraulic compactors, and engulfed in flames in open fields without a first responder in sight to stop this carnage. *Contemporary Eve* says fuck everyone and everything and jumps from the driver seat of a car headed into oncoming traffic. Other cars fly off cliffs for sport and decay underwater, as horses swim by. In moments of sensual play, people caress dead bees, bloody pearls, a shell containing construction nails. They rub and pet a square piece of sod. It is *Faces of Death* meets *The Bonfire of the Vanities*.

Another touchstone from Rogers' childhood was racing up mountains of oysters outside shelling facilities off Coos Bay, one of the poorest townships per capita in the United States. The oyster, a symbol of opulence, sensuality, and eroticism, stood in stark contrast to the abject poverty of the local landscape. Her painting series, *The World is Your Oyster*, explores this dichotomy between the sacred and profane, and digs into the reality of pearls being the result of irritants introduced by humans into the oyster's flesh.

In the two-channel video, Rogers shows images of oysters being grilled at summer barbecues while their shells are dumped by the truckload into piles to be converted into fertilizer. This decadent display is contrasted with the sensual motions of dancers embracing in front of a green screen as bodies roll around in grassy fields and glide like water moccasins through mossy lakes at night. But the pleasure cruise doesn't last long in Rogers' practice: ultimately, a horse is struck by a car, and in subsequent clips the remains are processed into chevaline.

Fraught with ecstasy, agony, ruin, and rapture, meat is a ripe terrain for Rogers. She extends—and egresses—the metaphors of consumption in her epic *Car Meat* sculpture. Made by sourcing the hoods of cars that have been in accidents, Rogers butchers them into choice cuts, then meticulously sands and lacquers them with fine pearl metallic auto paint. These fetish finish objects are then placed onto actual meat hooks on handmade trolleys, which hang and roll along a steel rack that extends eight feet into the air. *Car Meat* grinds the works of John Chamberlain, Alexander Calder and Ellsworth Kelly—a towering trio of American Modernism—into a feminist palette drawn from the coat of the *Akhal-Teke*, known as "the pearl horse" for its distinctive metallic sheen.

Like her crumpled wall relief, *Contemplating the Minds of 1000 Strangers*, the *Car Meat* sculpture is a meditation on the foreverness of these objects, which are at once beautiful and destructive, and our relentless addiction to them may well kill our planet. Like the oysters, which are now harboring one of the most deadly bacteria on the planet, their carcasses will be with us for generations to come.

Fertility and rebirth also abound in Rogers' paintings, which are drawn from the two-channel video, many of which depict extreme vantages of oyster shells, grass, meat, and the shells of burnt-out automobiles. Where Rogers' previous oyster paintings were full of sparkling pearls and tumescent meat, a painting of a glistening oyster shell against a midnight blue backdrop is defined by the lonely shred of pith hanging off it like a ripped skirt. In a landscape inspired by Andrew Wyeth's 1948 masterpiece, *Christina's World*, Wyeth's subject crawls around a grassy field in coastal Maine. What you might consider the eastern facsimile of Rogers' seaside climes in Oregon, as she surveys an expanse of bountiful farm terrain. In Rogers' painting, her Christina is recumbent in a field with a bombed-out old Ferrari, taking the place of Wyeth's barn in the background, punctuated by a tree sprouting from the engine block.

"I can't help but to dismantle intrinsic value in my work. I think about harmonious things that are concentrated and sensual like the sea, the soil, the grass," says Rogers. "I've always been drawn to the forbidden, the prohibited things that society tells us we shouldn't explore. But in exploring them, I find a sense of freedom, a sense of empathy. I want to be present in a world that is being destroyed."

About the artist

Fawn Rogers (b.1974, Portland, Oregon) lives and works in Los Angeles, California. Recent solo exhibitions include *Come Ruin or Rapture* in Galerie Marguo (Paris, 2023); *GODOG*, Lauren Powell Projects (Los Angeles 2023); *Burn, Gleam, Shine*, Galerie Marguo at K11 MUSEA (Hong Kong, 2023); *Your Your Perfect Plastic Heart*, Wilding Cran Gallery (Los Angeles, 2023); *Violent Garden*, The Lodge (Los Angeles, 2017); and *Subject*, Museum of Art and History (Lancaster, CA 2016). Select group exhibitions include *Beach*, Nino Mier Gallery (New York, 2023); *L.A. Woman*, Phillips (Los Angeles, 2023); *My Body, My Business*, Sotheby's (New York, 2023); *Solitude*, Nexx Taipei (Taiwan, 2023); *You Me Me You*, Nicodim Gallery (Los Angeles, CA, 2022); *Holy Water*, Eric Firestone Gallery (East Hampton, NY, 2022); *Don't Give Me Flowers*, Praz-Delavallade (Los Angeles, CA, 2022); *Everything Has Its Place*, Sevil Dolmaci (Istanbul, 2021); and *Yes Yes it is Burning Me*, Mykonos Biennale (Mykonos, GR 2019) among many others.

Press Inquiries

Maud Cartron
maud@marguo.com
+33 7 66 14 91 25

#FawnRogers #FawnRogersParis
#ComeRuinOrRapture
@galeriemarguo
marguo.com

Copyright et Courtesy Credits

Photo: © Fawn Rogers
Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Marguo

Fawn Rogers
Car Meat (Akhal Teke), 2023
Accident impacted car hoods, casters, meat hooks,
trolleys, automotive primer and paint. Rack mixed
metals
238.8 x 152.4 x 76.2 cm (94 x 60 x 30 in)
Unique