

KARLA BLACK

April 12 – May 18, 2019

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce its forth solo exhibition of new works by Scottish artist Karla Black (* 1972 in Alexandria).

Karla Black's work skirts between mediums a lot, sometimes it gets close to installation art, sometimes to performance, sometimes to painting, but it is always pulled back at the last moment to remain a sculpture. Black most frequently works with loose materials - plaster, chalk dust, pigment, soil, sawdust - and with materials familiar from life outside art - make-up, body butter, vaseline, lipstick, household cleaners, packaging and toiletries. She combines these with more structural elements such as glass, wood, paper and cardboard. Her large scaled sculptures are often made on site - directly in the exhibition space and with its typical physical and conceptual context in mind.

Karla Black's exhibition at Galerie Gisela Capitain is about mark-making as sculpture. Marks on the windows, doors, on the floor and on mirrors, using body butter, vaseline, lipstick. Inspired by the idea of psychoanalysis and its significance for art, Black has described her sculptures as "actual physical exploration into thinking, feeling, communicating and relating; parts of an ongoing search for understanding, through a material experience that has been prioritized over language."

With this show, Black's work is being stripped back to the moment of "impetus towards physical response", as she states. "A mark will, for example, become more removed from the experience of making it if the condition of the material changes, i. e. a soft substance becomes hard, like plaster or clay, or a wet dries out, like paint. Whereas, if the material remains the same or similar to when the mark was made, then the experience of making it stays close." In her work, Black combines her interest in the idea of the original, physical urge to create with her obsession with formal aesthetics.

For Black, abstraction is important. Not just pictorial abstraction but material abstraction. The lack of a figure or representation of any kind - taken to the extreme in the wiping out of the mirror reflection with paint - is an attempt to connect directly with the materiality of the world and forget about what we look like, resulting as an experience of absorption as living creatures rather than self-conscious interruption of being aware of our appearance. This is a feminist position and also a preference for abstraction as a political stance and a preference for sculpture as an escape via engulfment.