

GLADSTONE

Claudia Comte presents first solo exhibition in New York with Gladstone

Comte plays with space, form, and direction in her exhibition of new works, creating a rhythmic ecosystem with no apparent hierarchy

It's a hot summer day in the southern part of Italy. Clouds blow by; the thermostat glows red at its tip. The horizon shakes unevenly, like a bleak, overexposed line. It hurts to focus your eyes on it. In the dryness and the sweltering heat you recognize the objects around you only by their outlines, which repeat themselves beyond your view. 'NO MELON NO LEMON' is the supreme palindrome. It is dry wood in the shape of olive trees, dark burnt earth around them. No citrus fruits, no water vessel in sight—just the echo of the shapes. NO MELON NO LEMON is the repeating sound in your head as you read the same meaning backwards and forwards.

Gladstone is pleased to present Claudia Comte's first U.S. solo exhibition. The Swiss artist will create a site-specific environment comprising paintings and chainsaw-cut sculptures. Each work functions as part of a modular system of intricately connected elements. Arranged in a rhythmic, mathematical manner, they become an immersive space where forms repeat in delirious, self-referencing patterns.

Comte's wood sculptures have subtly recognizable forms, simultaneously reminiscent of classical sculptures and cartoon figures. Through their soft curves they take on anthropomorphic qualities that suggest they are actually characters—rebellious protagonists in the middle of a large, organized choir; troublemakers dancing out of line while the music pumps out a rhythmic beat.

Comte's sculptures sit on plinths that appear to have folded out from the walls. Their heights and depths are exaggerated almost to comedic effect: some extend nearly to the ceiling; others are low to the ground and cut through large expanses of the space. The lines that the plinths create are mirrored by additional lines carved into them and by vertical stripes which are painted on the walls and on circular canvases. These painted stripes toy with each other: sometimes matching each other's rhythms, other times bisecting each other at ninety degrees, creating syncopation, and their own sequential system. Repetitions with subtle variations are a leitmotif in Comte's work, which she uses to activate historical references and modern art codes.

The title of the exhibition is a direct response to repetitive gesture. Like the exhibition itself, *NO MELON NO LEMON* can be read backwards and forwards, so that neither the beginning nor the end nor the entry point is apparent. Each element is interconnected and dependent on each other, and each feels as if it could be repeated endlessly. The repetition and intersection of the lines become a pattern—the pattern becomes a grid and the grid becomes a matrix. It is within this matrix that all of the three-dimensional forms are built: organic, abstract sculptures standing in direct confrontation with their linear surroundings. Ultimately, there is harmony: between the wooden panels (left in a raw state, roughly cut and burnt dark), the wall painting (rigid and perfectly executed, bright and glowing), and the sculptures (impure in form and yet meticulously polished).

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It's hot and captivating; it's a volcano waiting to erupt. It's 100 degrees and the ice cream has melted.

Exhibition Details

NO MELON NO LEMON

January 29 – March 21, 2015

530 West 21st Street

New York, NY 10011

About Claudia Comte

Claudia Comte (b. 1983, Morges, Switzerland) lives and works in Basel, Switzerland. Recent solo and group exhibitions include K&L Museum, Seoul, Korea (2024); Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg (2023); LagoAlgo, Mexico City (2023); Fundación Casa Wabi, Oaxaca, Mexico (2023); Desert X, Alula, Saudi Arabia (2022), Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich (2022), 58th October Salon - Belgrade Biennale (2022), Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid (2021), Kunstraum Dornbirn, Austria (2020); Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2019), Copenhagen Contemporary, Denmark (2019); MOCA Cleveland, Ohio (2018); Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2018); KölnSkulptur #9, Cologne, Italy (2017); Basement Roma, Italy (2017); Messeplatz, Art Basel, Switzerland (2017); Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland (2017); Desert X, Palm Springs, California (2017); Public Art Fund, New York (2016); Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2014).

About Gladstone Gallery

Gladstone is recognized for its embrace of experimentation and visionary practices. The gallery has long been an active partner with artists pursuing catalytic ideas and engaging with pressing issues. Headquartered in New York, Gladstone's impact extends globally with galleries in Brussels and Seoul, enabling it to present new bodies of work and evolve its program to advance the practices and reach of its artists through time. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is a steward of the legacies of pivotal historical artists and an advocate for the enduring power of their work. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

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