

**Tables and Chairs:
Quintessa Matranga at What Pipeline**

Ashley Cook

October 24, 2022

Since their first exhibition featuring Lucie Stahl and Tom Humphreys in 2013, What Pipeline has deliberately blurred the line between a *Detroit* artist and an artist practicing anywhere else by bringing high quality work to the city to exhibit alongside locals who they also represent. In addition to regular programming taking place at their brick and mortar in South-west Detroit, they have collaborated with other galleries to host shows elsewhere including Paramount Ranch, Condo New York, NADA House and TOKAS. They continue to develop their role as an active player in the international contemporary art world, exhibiting at various events including NADA NYC, Sunday Art Fair in London, Material Art Fair in Mexico City, NADA Miami Beach, Paris International, and FAIR by NADA. Throughout the years, What Pipeline has reliably invited artists to show challenging work that stands at the forefront of thinking and practice, with their most recent exhibition being *Tables and Chairs* by Quintessa Matranga.



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Matranga's work usually holds a strong presence in whatever space it occupies, through additions of environmental alterations *around* the work or seemingly interactive elements included as *part of* the work. These additions gracefully teeter between play and intention to tap into deep rooted, hazy memories and engage the subconscious mind of the viewer. The decision making in regards to the space as well as the subject matter of the work feels dreamy and curiously vague, but not necessarily random. The consistent presence of fantasy in the work of Quintessa Matranga recalls surrealist and dadaist automatism, pays homage to artists throughout history, both "insider" and "outsider" and raises the question of compounds in relation to the image and object making in contemporary times. Younger artists who are engaged in

image making often seem to embrace the endless creation of meaning that comes with the excesses that have been around us since childhood. Matranga's work utilizes variety in subject, composition, drawing style, paint application, form and installation techniques from exhibition to exhibition, highlighting her varying influences and her attempt to produce work that more so asks questions rather than provides answers. The accompanying text by Mark Matchak approaches the process of interpretation loosely, with occasional hinges that consider the work as an asset to the history of painting, figurative and conceptual art. But the underlying message seems to be the importance of the viewer's *personal* narrative, emotions and philosophies, which become a primary influence on translation.



Lemon Cream



Rider



Caramel



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Lithium Pin
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Plutonium



Firefly

The six paintings and two sculptures that make up *Tables and Chairs* hint at the topic of mutation and diffusion through the use of mundane domestic fixtures. The welcoming piece *Rider* and its sister piece *Caramel* both employ an old wooden bar chair that seems to be afflicted with a cumbersome disfiguration, however they would still be functional if they continued to exist outside of the art context. There is also a third that was exhibited by What Pipeline at Paris International in tandem with the show in Detroit. *Orbit* continues a logic of mutation similar to the others, however as opposed to incorporating many more legs than necessary, there is a functioning pepper grinder that shares nearly the exact same form. These sculptures initially feel conceptually opaque just like the paintings on the clean white walls of the brightly lit gallery. But while the sculptures are almost

overly sturdy, the subjects of the paintings are falling off the canvas, or like ghosts, they are broken apart, involuntarily hybridizing, floating weightlessly or emerging from impossible perspectives. These highly familiar forms hold an interesting ability to assume a lifelike presence through slight alterations, perhaps because of our intimate relationship with them throughout time or the small details like the shapes of the legs resembling limbs of a living creature. But it is still unclear the sure reason for much of the decision making in this exhibition and the airy presence of ambiguity is only further perpetuated by titles like *Dragonfly*, *Gumball*, *Lithium Pin* and *Lemon Cream*. It seems that the work may ultimately be encouraging us to practice floating in wonder or find comfort in a liminal space that is absent of certainty, even in the most common and familiar of things.



Dragonfly

Tables and Chairs is Quintessa Matranga's second solo exhibition with What Pipeline and is currently on display, viewable during their open hours, Thursday-Saturday 1-6pm until Saturday, October 29, 2022

<http://whatpipeline.com/>

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Photos by Ashley Cook