

WORKS ON PAPER

Melinda Braathen, Paolo Colombo,
Francesca Gabbiani, Reuben Gordon, Dene Leigh,
Daniel Silva, Sophie Wahlquist

February 8 – March 28, 2020

Baert gallery is pleased to present *Works on paper*, a group exhibition featuring Melinda Braathen, Paolo Colombo, Francesca Gabbiani, Reuben Gordon, Dene Leigh, Daniel Silva and Sophie Wahlquist.

Encompassing a diverse range of media — from drawing and painting to collage and beyond — works on paper can offer a glimpse into an artist's creative process. For many, the freedom and immediacy afforded by working on paper became instrumental to their practices, spawning new techniques and aesthetics, subjects and methods.

Far from being confined to studies and experiments, works on paper represent important modes of art-making in their own right.

Melinda Braathen's works blend figuration and abstraction in an effort to express how dependent our perception is on physiology. Braathen's process often begins with accurately representing the figure within her environment, only to gradually obliterate, conceal or dissolve it into a series of abstract forms. In several instances, what remains is an artistic interpretation of an individual's internal psychology, in an effort to render visible every day rhythms and sensations arising inside the body, as well as subtle external forces exerted on the body.

Paolo Colombo is an artist living in Athens, working exclusively with watercolors and pencil drawings. His works illustrate a lyrical series of moments, each holding the intensity of a world. Ranging in sizes to be peered into or poured over, they open across saturated washes of color, checkered squares, fine lines or lettering with the consistency of embroidered cloth.

Francesca Gabbiani creates cut-outs that require extensive amounts of time, technical organization, a well thought-out visualization of each work, and the built-in potential to incorporate in each piece the eventual spontaneous events that determine its final creation. Gabbiani's method is unforgiving; the piece is finalized after days, weeks and months of work. From the initial drawing (or photograph), Gabbiani constructs the image layer after layer, relying on strata of fastidiously cut archival paper, rather than the rules of perspective.

Reuben Gordon is most interested in color, and formal qualities of painting. Concepts, emotions and meanings follow, through them. Gordon's current work mainly consists of interior figurative scenes and exterior cityscapes, set where he was born and raised in Manhattan's Lower East Side, and Brooklyn. His depictions, of friends and places he is in close, intimate relationships with, are filled with humor and existential longing.

Through painting, sculpture and drawing, **Dene Leigh** investigates neurological impairment and the fragility of human memory. In his series of drawings, Leigh investigates aphasia, through the medium of found ephemera. The difficulties of people with aphasia can range from occasional trouble finding and understanding words, to losing the ability to read, write or speak coherently. The repetition of geometrical shapes that obscure the text makes the letters illegible, in a similar way to aphasia impairing the ability to define language.

Daniel Silva's work typically takes the form of assemblages that inform and transform the space around them. Perception and contemplation play an integral role in forming a cohesion that is not let by a fixed narrative. Among the materials used by Silva are beeswax, magnets, charcoal, metal and wood, all fundamental in delivering an orchestrated interplay of emotive and referential cues.

Sophie Wahlquist's works depart from a state of mind rather than from a narrative. Playing with different genres of painting and medium, new gestures and perspectives reverse existing ideas. she likes to negotiate the level to which absence can be replaced by clarity of something intangible or how the depiction of something recognizable can become a trigger for imagination —“Flowers become portraits of groups rather than a still life and I can relate to a breastfeeding monkey as much as I feel the estrangement and separation I find between people”.—