

# NATHALIE KARG

## *Siren on the Landline*

Dorian Gaudin

SEPTEMBER 6 - OCTOBER 22, 2022

Opening Reception: SEPTEMBER 20th, 6-8pm

*Siren on the Landline*, Dorian Gaudin's third solo exhibition at Nathalie Karg, is centered around a mock office space comprised of tinseltownian props and laminates impressed upon varied surfaces. A mechanical installation is situated within the set as a means to interrupt a mundane situation. The color and mobility of this patch is reminiscent of Fellini's *Casanova* (1976) where the filmmaker used flailing tarps to improvise a tempestuous black sea. A body maintains post in Gaudin's installation, remaining passive save for the effects of the machine and an occasional cruise on the smartphone.

Michael Snow's *\*Corpus Callosum* (2002) is a direct inspiration for Gaudin's uncanny office scenario as manipulation is at the fore of both works. While Snow's interventions are primarily digital, Gaudin has implemented a mechanical installation in order to physically alter the objects in its vicinity. The artist, performer(s), and technological intervention(s) emerge as a triad of forces operating in quasi-controlled environments. Additionally, Gaudin invokes an element of the absurd as he integrates a performer within his artificial display. He takes note of the relationship between banality and intervention as his actor takes phone calls or else settles into his or her position as the earth below moves and shakes.

*Untitled* is on view again, ten years after its initial staging. The floorwork consists of a monitor positioned within a sheet of corrugated aluminum. Footage of a deer hopping through overgrown brush is looped on the screen's display. Here, the interaction between the video and metal is pronounced as the deer appears to leap over the sheet's crimped surface. This merging of elements is doubled as the glow from the monitor is reflected in the aluminum's smooth finish. The animal's movement determines the landscape here, whereas the installation presents a situation in which the landscape determines a body's reaction.

Gaudin's wall works bear the residue of performance, they become testaments to his confrontations with aluminum. In order to achieve these dynamic protrusions, Gaudin wrestles with the metal sheets and enhances the sites of conflict with chrome solution. Once the performance is initiated, color, context and intervention are triggered. A stark contrast is pronounced as ultra matte clashes with a glistening compound. These inert situations confront the active installation while also moonlighting as bizarre office decor. The wall works and Gaudin's fabricated scene are both grounded in his manipulation of aluminum materials and the procedural approaches inscribed within the two. Performative alterations of surfaces are precisely what activate these works.

By allowing incidental materials to remain visible, Gaudin exposes the skeletons of his process. Machinations are thus on view by design, becoming a part of the installation and welcoming conspicuity into the mix. Dramatic irony permeates the scene as the viewer observes the strangeness of the static performer amidst the chaotic operations within the exhibition space. With *Siren on the Landline* Gaudin offers devices left to their own devices. This is trial by kinetic installation.

— Reilly Davidson  
September '22