

Artist: **Kim Bartelt**

Exhibition: **Break Easy**

Dates: **17th May – 30th June 2023**

Cadogan Gallery

Via Bramante 5, 20154, Milan

Cadogan Gallery is delighted to announce *Break Easy*, an exhibition of new works by German artist Kim Bartelt. This will be the artist's second solo exhibition with Cadogan and the first time her work will be shown in Milan. In *Break Easy*, Bartelt has created a series of paintings that mediate on the ephemerality of the world and the very act of art making itself through the use of elementary form and translucent colour. Made in response to a statement once posed by the poet, Ocean Vuong, that the most powerful and strengthening thing an artist can do is to "bring down the shield (they've) been taught to put up around them", the works in the series reveal a pulsing inner landscape that resonates with intellectual introspection and discordant energy.

A sense of fragility pervades these works, a precariousness as fine and fragile as the thin, membranous paper the artist fixes onto the canvas. These delicate sheets, slightly ripped and alive with snaking lines or capillaries, are pasted on to the rougher, unprimed side of the canvas, where the fibrous texture comes through and indents itself directly onto the angular forms. In each painting we see the gradual alterations throughout the series as Bartelt explores the progressive layers of thought, producing visual expressions of the inexplicable. Like metaphoric shields, they become symbolic manifestations of the guards we put up around ourselves; channeling the vibration of life's events to move from the personal and subjective to the broad and universal.

In her sculptural work, the rigid angular blocks may at first appear robust, yet they are a hollow shell, made from stiff, everyday cardboard. They look as though the slightest push could topple them over. These redundant forms focus attention on the surrounding wall works that line up, side by side, their serene tones quivering in impressive silence; their power stemming from their subtle interplay between depth and flatness and their gently antagonistic use of colour. Without offering any form of resolution they instead engage a sensory dimension, articulating unknown sentiments that reveal the contradictory threads of the human condition and the emotional resilience required to be an artist.

About the Artist

Born in Berlin, Germany, Bartelt studied art history in Paris before moving to the US and finishing her studies in Fine Art at Parsons School of Design in New York. It was there that she started collecting paper and slowly began incorporating it into her art practice; making impossibly light, minimal collages that appear to transcend their own materiality through their delicate translucence. Since then she has continued to work with paper, juxtaposing the clarity of the forms with the fine, intimate detail of the textured paper. Her restrained visual vocabulary, and luminous colour palette, harness complex emotional states into controlled, deeply harmonious compositions. In recent years the artist has begun exploring space and volume with large-scale sculptural works, made of deceptively lightweight material.

Bartelt has had numerous solo exhibitions most notably at Cadogan Gallery, Milan in 2023 and Cadogan Gallery, London in 2022. In that same year, her work was a prominent feature in *An Endless Curve – Art Perspectives III* at the Circle Culture Gallery, Berlin as well as *A Double Presentation*, Wilhelm Hallen #2, Berlin in 2021. Bartelt has exhibited all around the world including Mexico City, Ghent, London, Berlin, and US. In 2019 she completed artist residencies at Numeroventi 2019 in Italy and Joya AiR 2019 in Spain. Bartelt has been the subject of a number of editorial features including Capital Magazine 2022, Architectural Digest Germany 2020 and Wall Street Magazine 2020.

About the Gallery

Cadogan is an independent contemporary art gallery with spaces in London, Hampshire and Milan. For over forty years our mission has been to represent, support and curate the work of a diverse roster of emerging and mid-career artists. Since joining the gallery in 2014, Freddie Burness has added a new international perspective to the rich history and distinctive approach of the gallery's programme.

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