

Sara Bjarland, CONSTANT ERUPTIONS, 12 January – 22 February 2020

In her sculptures, installations and photographs, Sara Bjarland uses discarded objects to investigate overlaps and encounters between the natural and the artificial, the living and the non-living, object and organism. She is especially interested in “post-consumer materials”, also called waste, as a consequence of our consumer culture, and as a form of abject matter that nobody wants to look at. Bjarland sees waste as an important carrier of meaning, and as material with potential to transform into more ambiguous forms and meanings. She searches the trash piles on the street corners collecting things like broken furniture, plastic garden accessories, old floor mops, dead house plants, bent drying racks; everyday household objects without any apparent aesthetic value. Sometimes appropriating or altering the objects, sometimes casting them into materials like ceramic or bronze, Bjarland tries to extract new meanings and explore other possible lives for these objects, imagining them as artefacts or future inhabitants in a world without humans. She is interested in the grey area where the domains of the natural and the artificial are blending and blurring, and lifeless matter seems to spring to life, only to start fading again.

Constant Eruptions is Bjarland’s third solo exhibition at Hopstreet Gallery. The exhibition title is inspired by the city of *Leonia* in Italo Calvino’s book *Invisible Cities*. *Leonia* is a city that renews itself and all its materials every day and as a consequence, produces a growing mountain of trash in its peripheries. The text is in many ways a reflection on Western, consumption-centered cities where the cycle of buying new things and throwing away other things, seems as constant as a force of nature.

“On the sidewalks, encased in spotless plastic bags, the remains of yesterday's Leonia await the garbage truck. Not only squeezed tubes of toothpaste, blown-out light bulbs, newspapers, containers, wrappings, but also boilers, encyclopedias, pianos, porcelain dinner services. It is not so much by the things that each day are manufactured, sold, bought, that you can measure Leonia's opulence, but rather by the things that each day are thrown out to make room for the new. ... Perhaps the whole world, beyond Leonia's boundaries, is covered by craters of rubbish, each surrounding a metropolis in constant eruption.”

Sara Bjarland lives and works in Amsterdam. She studied at The Slade School of Fine Art in London, and is an alumna of the HISK in Ghent (2013). Artist residencies include the EKWC in Oisterwijk and TBG+S in Dublin. Recent exhibitions were *Uncertainty and Ground Conditions* at DASH, Kortrijk and *The Sound of No-one Listening* at Corridor Project Space, Amsterdam. In 2019 she was one of the five nominees for the Below Zero Art Prize in London, and published her first monographic publication *Groundwork*, together with Art Paper Editions.