

**ELMGREEN & DRAGSET
STIGMA**

Massimo De Carlo gallery is pleased to present *Stigma*, Elmgreen & Dragset's third solo exhibition in the gallery, on view from May 3rd through June 27th in Milan. The exhibition features a new series of works titled *Side Effects* – a number of custom-made glass vases displayed throughout the main gallery space. The uniform shape of these hand blown vases recalls that of an urn, yet here they are slightly slimmer, sleeker and oversized, ranging from 50 to 90 cm in height. Each vase is filled with the actual pigments used to coat pills in the latest generation of HIV medicines, such as Truvada, Atripla, Stribild and Isentress. The pastel color pigments – peach, pink, mint green and light blue – evoke a sense of innocence and put forth an outwardly harmless façade, an attractive, almost candy-like appearance that contradicts the toxic reality of these medications.

Employing and at the same time subverting the tenets of minimalism, *Side Effects* can be seen in a historical context of works by artists such as Roni Horn or Félix González-Torres, or as an updated version of the artist group General Idea's *PLA©EBO* from 1991. However, today HIV is no longer considered a fatal disease and with new medicines, patients can count on a close to normal life expectancy, though often burdened with various side effects. In spite of the record high numbers of newly infected young people in recent years, the media and governments seem to have lost their interest in the subject matter now that HIV is no longer a sensational topic. Elmgreen & Dragset's vases stand in groups of one, two or three, according to the daily prescribed pill dosage and combination of each medicine. They are displayed on low, clinical looking plinths made in stainless steel, reminiscent of the sterile interior of a laboratory as well as of Donald Judd's aesthetics.

In the gallery's adjacent room, Elmgreen & Dragset guide the audience into a more intimate ambience that contrasts with the previous hall, presenting a single sculptural work entitled *TRACES*, a lone streamer hanging from a switched on wall lamp, as though left behind after a party. The pastel colors of the metal cast streamer are similar to those of the pigments in the *Side Effects* series.

During the 1990s, AIDS was a much-debated subject in the work of prominent visual artists, but today it appears less frequently in the context of contemporary art. With *Stigma*, Elmgreen & Dragset again refer to the illness, but now at a time when treatment has become more manageable due to the new medicines available on the market. The title *Stigma* underlines the societal consequences and lingering prejudices that still continue to surround the disease.



Based in London and Berlin, Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961, Denmark) and Ingar Dragset (b. 1969, Norway) have worked as a collaborative duo since 1995. Elmgreen & Dragset have had solo exhibitions in prominent institutions worldwide, including: *Biography*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen and Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo (2014); *Tomorrow*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013); *The One & The Many*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2011); *Celebrity – The One & The Many*, ZKM Karlsruhe (2010); *The Welfare Show*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); *Prada Marfa*, Art Production Fund/Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, Texas (2005); *Blocking The View – Just A Single Wrong Move – Somewhere in The World It's Four O'Clock*, Tate Modern, London (2004); *Short Cut*, Fondazione Trussardi, Milan (2003), among others. The artists have been commissioned to install a number of sculptures, including *HAN* at Kulturevaerftet Helsingør, Denmark; *Powerless Structures, Fig. 101*, Fourth Plinth Commission, Trafalgar Square, London (their winning commission selected by the City of London); and *It's Never Too Late to Say Sorry*, a daily performance as part of Sculpture International Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

In 2012 Elmgreen & Dragset participated in the Liverpool Biennial, and in 2009 they represented Denmark and Norway at the 53rd Venice Biennale, with a comprehensive exhibition that took place in both the Danish and Nordic Pavilions. They also took part in the Istanbul (2013, 2001), São Paulo (2002) and Gwangju (2002) biennials and the Yokohama Triennale in 2008 in Japan.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo

Via Giovanni Ventura, 5 – 20134 Milano

May 3rd – June 27th, Tuesday to Saturday 11.30 – 19.30

Opening reception on May 3rd 2015 from 11.00am to 3.00pm

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