

Eliza Ballesteros

SHABRACK

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opening June 24th

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Man and horse are bound together in a bond that has lasted for thousands of years: visual fragments of a once cultic worship bear witness to a multitude of contemporary testimonies of the relationship between man and animal that are still symbolically charged or newly produced today. Over time and through the influence of various forces, domestication leads to so-called characteristic changes in living beings. Anatomical changes and altered behaviour are referred to as domestication effects. The wild horse becomes a pony, the wild plant becomes an Ikea palm: living beings that are isolated from their wild form, always for the sake of adaptation according to utility.

In her expansive installation CONES (FOR MICHAËL), 2021, Eliza Ballesteros refers to the visual subjects of the cones in Michaël Borremann's paintings. The process to Borremann's series was led by chance as he began with fabric samples to make costumes for another body of work. The fabrics were presented on cones to simulate the shape of a human figure. Borremann was fascinated by the strange and peculiar presentation of those objects and decided to commit them as painterly subjects. In the exhibition SHABRACK, the painter's silent protagonists are transformed into tokens, they lose their mask-like countenance, their shell-like magic, and become abstract, extensive objects exposed on a strictly claimed surface. By appropriating the pictorial subjects, Ballesteros, inverts different layers of painted and real spaces and thereby manages to turn the idea of abstraction inside out.

The wood inlays from the WHIP series (2021), created especially for the exhibition, show various types of whips or a whip top in the form of ornamental wood mosaics. Evidence of such inlay work can already be found in the oldest known advanced civilisations, for example on coffins and later on profane as well as sacred functionaries. In the wall works, she plays with her graphic interest, asserting a domesticated reference while suggesting her fascination with the dysfunctionality of things.

Ballesteros refuses a precise image of the horse, incorporating fur in her cones and intertwining them with her interest in the animal and its bridle. By means of the works HORSE BITE I-II (2021), the artist leaves gestural traces of leading and steering. The bridle in the mouth and the reins in the hand – they can be considered as links between dominance and devotion; fetishised tools for empowerment and control or the loss of the same.

Luisa Schlotterbeck