

Jenny Brosinski

*As Long as I Get Somewhere*

**Opening:** 28 October 2022, 5-8pm

**Exhibition:** 28 October – 3 December 2022

WENTRUP is pleased to present "As Long as I Get Somewhere," the first solo exhibition by Jenny Brosinski in both gallery spaces.

Jenny Brosinski's paintings negotiate relationships to emptiness. They know that like silence, blankness can be deafening, but can also open up into something expansive, approximating freedom. Brosinski works big, recently on canvases stretching two or three meters wide, extending the presence of that raw canvas across which she choreographs her gestures. Despite her marks' bold crudeness, these patches of muddled pink oil or trailing lines of yellow spray paint don't appear like incursions against the canvas, but rather modes of navigating and accentuating its encompassing quality. This is no confrontation, and as such, sidesteps the approach of much gestural abstraction that tacitly positions white space vs artist as an initiatory face-off. Take, for instance, the reverent bent on this encounter that informed Robert Motherwell's practice: "I find a blank canvas so beautiful that to work immediately [...] is inhibiting and, for me, demands too much too quickly; so that my tendency is to get the canvas 'dirty' and then, so to speak, "work in reverse," and try to bring it back to an equivalent of the original clarity and perfection of the canvas that one began on."<sup>1</sup> Brosinski also sullies her canvases, as she starts out working on the floor and the smudges, folds and footprints picked up there become part of her compositions. Unlike Motherwell's quest for transcendence, however, she's after paintings that stand ajar of harmony: just off-balance, continuously adjusting to instability. This is the stance these paintings take, as they derive dynamism from edging towards discomfort.

Sometimes she leaves the middle of the canvas empty, loosely positioning her marks as framing devices or marginal notations, as in *And when the night is cloudy there is still a light that shines on me* (all works 2022), where a sprayed yellow line demarcates a boundary that is traversed by thick strokes of dusty pink beside a nucleus of brown lines on the right hand side of the canvas. In other works, including a number of the paintings in "As Long As I Get Somewhere", a conglomeration of marks form creature-like shapes at the centre of the canvas. She quotes a number of forebearers—Cy Twombly's scrawl, Joan Mitchell's use of the color white, Michael Krebber's quick and dirty dashes, Bad Painting's muckiness—and messes with the stakes of working through painterly inheritance by citing herself as well with some tongue in cheek, as the scraggly black line at the center of *And when the night is cloudy there is still a light that shines on me* replicates her own spontaneous line drawn in charcoal in graphically rendered black oil. Though surrounded

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<sup>1</sup> "Painting as existence: an interview with David Sylvester 1962". *The Writings of Robert Motherwell*, edited by Dore Ashton and Joan Banach, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020, pp. 205-211. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520940512-053>

by open space, Brosinski's marks tend to overlap in clusters, as if gravitating towards each other. In these layers—a frenzy of blackened yellow in *but now these days are gone* or a collision of deep blue, blood red and pale pink blockish clouds overlaid by hasty brown and teal lines in *Help me get my feet back on the ground*—colors interfere with, but never fully obscure, each other. Tones meld and jostle in contrast to one another, as Brosinski employs varying degrees of transparency and opacity to foreground questions of perception. Here, there is no simply seeing—no “original clarity” —as one thing is always viewed through another. These paintings are insistent reminders that the act of looking is always embodied, filtered by the particularity of one's own point of view. Acknowledging the baggage, biases, and limitations of one's own perspective is the closest one comes to stepping into the vantage point of another. The blank space here could figure, perhaps, as space for such imaginings.

But also as a playground, as there is a lightheartedness to these paintings, which don't seem to take themselves too seriously. This tone also imbues Brosinski's drawings and sculpture—two mediums also essential to her practice—which allow a different approach to the questions that inform her paintings, namely to get somewhere, as the exhibition title suggests. Such a sense of motion is particularly palpable in her drawings, with mixed media compositions on paper that are formally resonant with the paintings, but appear swifter. The vaguely monster-like blobs that appear in paintings like *Shinin' until tomorrow and I've never done before* draw a subtle sense of humor, which morph into her delightfully weird bronze creatures. Brosinski's sculptural work began with a seated unicorn covering its eyes in 2019 and has continued to develop into a cast of characters, including the four-legged *HornHead*, on view here. Crafted in clay, the creatures bear tactile imprints of their fashioning, reminiscent of figures made from play dough. Once cast in bronze, Brosinski spray paints the figures with seemingly haphazard lines, as if fooling around with the expectations of the medium. She repositions monumentality, whether in brashness, bigness or bronze, as something to poke fun at, play around with, and make her own.

— *Camila McHugh*

Jenny Brosinski was born in 1984 in Celle. She lives and works in Berlin.

She has had international exhibitions in institutions and galleries in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States.

Currently, works of Brosinski are on view in the group exhibitions “New European and American Painters and Sculptors”, The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse in Miami and “Energetic Gestures” at Kunstsaele, Berlin.

Brosinkis works are in the collections of the MMCA National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, KR | Public Collection of the city of Gothenburg, SW | Kai Loebach Collection, Los Angeles, US | Margulies