

Stand By Me

Elmgreen & Dragset

08.03.2022
19.03.2022

For their first presentation at MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique in Paris, artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset subvert the exhibition space by creating a psychologically charged tension between the viewer and the work on display.

Produced specifically for MASSIMODECARLO's rue de Turenne space, *Stand By Me* is a life-size marble statue of a young boy leaning his hands against the gallery's clear street-facing window. Gazing out towards the busy street, the small boy's placid, ambiguous presence rouses curiosity. Why is he standing there? What is he watching: could it be the passers-by outside or an event that has just taken place, which we were not privy to? It is not clear if he is content or if we are looking at a young boy longing for something beyond his reach.

Enticed into an ambiguous freeze-frame, viewers are invited to contemplate the boy's own interior world as well as his situation, caught between public and private spheres, in a place of solitude. Whilst we consider how to identify with this child, his motionless, white Carrara marble figure reminds us of his artificiality. Like a mirage glimpsed from outside the windowpane, *Stand By Me* has an almost ghost-like quality that seems to both communicate with us and disregard us all at once.

Elmgreen & Dragset's sculptural practice often pursues questions of masculinity and upbringing, challenging traditional depictions of the male as heroic. Many of their figurative sculptures are made in classical materials such as bronze or marble but are then embedded in contemporary settings or narratives. Developing these thematic investigations, *Stand By Me* is the latest in a body of work that explores the emotional tribulations of childhood.

The sculpture sits in dialogue with some of the artist duo's earlier works such as *Dilemma* (2017), where the figure of a boy is seen standing on the edge of a tall diving board in Ekeberg Sculpture Park, Oslo, or *Powerless Structures, Fig. 101*, a sculpture of a boy astride his rocking horse, first shown in 2012 on the Fourth Plinth in London's Trafalgar Square.

To quote the artists' own words: "we often show the male form – a leitmotif in our sculptural works – during childhood, adolescence, or young adulthood in a moment of contemplation, vulnerability, wonder, fear, excitement or discomfort, or a combination of these. These depictions subvert the conventional representation of masculinity in classical sculpture, which often portrays the male figure in a heroic posture."

This presentation at MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique is organized in the lead-up to Elmgreen & Dragset's much anticipated exhibition « Useless bodies? » that will open at Fondazione Prada on March 31st in Milan. We acknowledge Perrotin and MASSIMODECARLO Milano for this exhibition.

Press Contact:

Francesca Sabatini
sabatini@massimodecarlo.com
www.massimodecarlopieceunique.fr
IG: massimodecarlopieceunique

Artwork details

Elmgreen & Dragset
Stand By Me, 2022
Statuary marble
144.6 × 67.2 × 42.5 cm / 57 × 26 1/2 × 16 4/5
inches

Elmgreen & Dragset

Elmgreen & Dragset are based in Berlin and have worked together as an artist duo since 1995. They have held numerous solo exhibitions at art institutions worldwide, most recently at EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, as well as the Serpentine Gallery and Whitechapel Gallery in London, Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, and UCCA in Beijing. Their work has been included in biennials across the world, including Berlin, Gwangju, São Paulo, Moscow, and Istanbul. In 2009 they received a special mention at the 53rd Venice Biennale for their curated exhibition “The Collectors” in the Nordic and Danish Pavilions. In recent years, the duo has conceived an increasing number of projects for public spaces, namely “The Hive” in Moynihan Train Hall (2020) and “Van Gogh’s Ear” at Rockefeller Plaza in New York (2016); “Life Rings” at Royal Djurgården in Stockholm (2021); “Bent Pool” in Miami Beach (2019); “To Whom It May Concern” at Place Vendôme in Paris; and “Zero” in Bangkok.

Next year, the artists will have a solo exhibition at Centre Pompidou-Metz.