

REVIEWS OCT. 13, 2016

Peter Linde Busk

NEW YORK,
at Derek Eller

by Eric Sutphin



Peter Linde Busk:
Venus de Milo, 2016,
treated wood, wood
stain, lacquer, and
artist's oak frame, 92½
by 72¾ inches; at
Derek Eller.

Harold Rosenberg noted in 1964 that by appropriating past styles and tropes an artist “‘flattens out time’ by bringing its successive layers forward into a durationless present.” In the paintings, collages, mosaics, and ceramics in Berlin-based, Copenhagen-born Peter Linde Busk’s US solo debut, characters like the harlequin and the Amazon warrior are borrowed freely from art history. Linde Busk utilizes such references as one of his conceptual tools, attempting to wrest fresh affective experience from familiar subjects by depicting them with unexpected materials and methods.

In this show, there were three large collages on wood panels (all 2016) that each feature an ostensibly female figure in nearly the same pose—she stands awkwardly on thin legs, holding a long object (perhaps a sword or a parasol). Composed of pieces of stained and painted wood, linen, and paper, the figure in *Penthesilea, The Amazonian Queen* is set against a background of tightly wound coils

of corrugated cardboard, which form a wallpaper-like pattern. The two other collages are titled *Sister Ray*, after the Velvet Underground’s heroin-dealing cross-dresser, and *Venus de Milo*, after the armless Greek marble sculpture. Like *Penthesilea* (who killed herself upon learning of her lover’s death), these characters are in some way “ruined,” a theme that Linde Busk summons materially with scraps and detritus.

Three ghostlike figures stand and gaze forward in the acrylic-and-crayon painting *And in That Place He Did Succumb to What Was Offered* (2016). The composition and the diamond pattern on the central character’s pants invoke Picasso’s *Three Musicians* (1921). Muddy washed of paint and frenetic linear work build up evocative but ambiguous gestures, giving the figures crazed expressions, not unlike those of de Kooning’s *Women*. The harlequin figure in the middle seems to aim a thin object at the crotch of the character to his right. The painting suggests numerous narratives, from a triad of junkies passing a needle to a ritualistic castration.

Linde Busk’s explorations of ruin continued in several sculptural works. In *Charon’s Call* (2016), a pedestal painted in blue tones supports what looks like a large piece of white coral. Gold glaze traces the cracks and pits in the surface of the object, as if validating the imperfections. A wall-hung oval, *Rosebud* (2016), at six feet tall and six inches thick, contains hundreds of strips of cardboard, paper, polyester, and other materials coiled around a central white ceramic disc. Drawn into the clay, which is cracked down the middle, is a Picasso-style character with a large eye.

Linde Busk calls forth Rosenberg’s “durationless present” throughout his work, which shifts between feeling distinctly contemporary and feeling clearly nostalgic. At times, he seems adrift in a sea of influences, but at his best, through his tussle between originality and appropriation, he produces satisfying, genuine work that bears the scars of creative struggle.