

# NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

## Lucy Puls

### *Offline Perception*

December 9 - January 22, 2021

Opening reception Thursday, December 9, 6-8 PM

Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is pleased to present *Offline Perception*, the gallery's first exhibition with Berkeley-based artist Lucy Puls. *Offline Perception* gathers three bodies of work that Puls has been developing over the past decade: *Geometria Concretus* (2011-2015), *Accumulatus Verissime* (2016-ongoing), and *Delapsus* (2017-ongoing), all of which are on view in New York for the first time.

Though remarkably diverse in media and scale, the works on view in *Offline Perception* all share a common source material. In the wake of the subprime mortgage crisis of the late aughts, Puls determinedly photographed the interiors of empty, bank-owned homes around the Bay Area, California, tracing the remnants of life and memory these spaces carried. Cracking, peeling paint and scuffed, patched floors index life before it was forced to leave, the absence of maintenance or stewardship clear under the bank's new "ownership."

In particular, Puls' interest in the homes orbited around the stuff that was left behind. Since the early 1980s, the artist has consistently turned to that which is discarded—old toys, appliances, encyclopedias, and other thrift store or curbside finds—as sites to interrogate materiality, capitalism, memory, and personal desire, ultimately seeking to understand what is and what isn't passed or handed down.

Puls' largest works to date comprise the core of *Offline Perception*. Entitled *Delapsus*, these pigment ink on paper sculptures measure 130 inches tall and cascade off the walls in crumpled, shaped forms. Discarded objects—a punch bowl, silver-plated serving ware, a folding chair—pool on the floor in the tangled ends of the paper. Obscuring a clear view of the interiors are abstract forms from a chemically altered photograph of foreclosed homes; their titles, such as *Delapsus (Bedroom, Mirrored Closet Door, Mini Blinds, Movie Poster)* and *Delapsus (Family Room with Exposed Subfloor)*, illuminate what lies within the surface of the image. Puls manifests a friction between reality and memory as rendered through her complex material processes.

Juxtaposed with the monumentality of *Delapsus*, framed works nearby render Puls' source images at a smaller, more overtly photographic scale. From the series *Accumulatus Verissime*, these three works employ the language of photography then shift quickly away; upon closer inspection, each surface ripples with carefully applied pyrite, steel powder, or reflective glass beads. The subtle textures demonstrate the artist's longterm interest in challenging perception through material dissonance, calling into question the real and the not-real.

At an even smaller scale, *Geometria Concretus* highlight an earlier alchemical approach to merging sculpture and photography. Here the photographs Puls took inside the foreclosed homes are themselves the material, a ground upon which, once printed and mounted on aluminum, she employs a variety of tactics to manipulate the image. Adhesives lift ink or tear the surface of the paper, while gouache or polyurethane resin mark the image in lines and shapes. Mica and oxidized metals are also applied, producing a subtle alchemy atop the highly detailed, yet anonymous imagery—the patinated surfaces echoing the marred domestic interiors. Each composition sits atop a polyurethane or wood shelf as though a marker or monument, eschewing any determined dimensionality in its curious object-ness. As Glen Helfand observed of the series when it premiered nearly a decade ago, "Puls has created a psychic smudging of the bank-owned building while making a humanist gesture toward a heartless financial phenomenon."

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**Lucy Puls** (b. 1955, lives and works in Berkeley, CA) received her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1980. She has had solo exhibitions at P.Bibeau, New York, NY; Verge Center for the Arts, Sacramento, CA; Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, CA; Memorial Union Gallery at University of California, Davis, CA; and Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC, among others. Group exhibitions include BAMPFA, Berkeley, CA; Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO; The Jewish Museum, New York, NY; SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA; SculptureCenter, Queens, NY; and DiverseWorks, Houston, TX, among many others.

Her work can be found in numerous public collections, including SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA; Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA; BAMPFA, Berkeley, CA; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Honolulu Museum of Art, Honolulu, HI; Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco, CA and the Jewish Museum, New York, NY. Puls is Professor Emeritus of Art at University of California, Davis.