

Magali Reus

And Orchard

July 9 - August 20, 2022



François Ghebaly is proud to announce **Magali Reus's** *And Orchard*, the first exhibition by the Dutch sculptor in Los Angeles. The exhibition opens with a public reception on July 9 and remains on view through August 20.

And Orchard consists of two new series of works, "Candlesticks" and "Landings," that explore metabolism, energy, the passage of time, and the coursing lines of power that bring sustenance from the sun to our cities, homes and dinner tables.

Reus's sculptures are the product of numerous production processes—molding, printing, sanding, casting, painting, welding, sewing, carving, 3D printing—deployed in combination and without heed to standard fabrication chronologies or practices. The resulting sculptures are in turn charismatic and evasive, telegraphing meaning through open-ended symbolism and oblique connectivity. They are, in Reus's words, "captivating but not held captive."

"Candlesticks" consists of towering streetlamps, powder-coated in a stately, earthy green. A series of object substitutions, barely perceptible at first, destabilize this quotidian piece of urban lighting. Where a typical lamppost houses an illuminated lantern at its top, the capitals of these posts are open and oversized incandescent light bulbs. And where a typical incandescent bulb holds an electrified filament, here the curlicues of bent metal instead form cursive English words, each spelling out a different type of electrical illumination. 'Halogen,' 'fluorescent,' and 'LED' slide in and out of legibility as the viewer's perspective shifts around the works.

A different script adorns the shafts of these lamps: numbers inscribed on the surface in hand-carved markings. Echoing lovers' carvings in the bark of trees, the romance of these inscriptions is in tension with quantitative measurements of agribusiness—

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sunlight hours for crop growing, average crop weight and sizes. Below these markings, on the base of the lampposts, a cross-sectioned opening reveals an oversized fruit or vegetable in 3D-printed resin and plaster, sitting as if incubating in some futuristic growth chamber. In one, a scaled-up raspberry postures on an oversized picnic plate; in another is an ear of corn. Part sanded white plaster and colorfully painted surface, the finish lends the produce the quality of a prototype, a product in development.

Produce also appears in a new series of sculptural photographs titled “Landings,” which twist the tradition of the Dutch still life. Each image centers on a pert fruit photographed within a *mise-en-scène* of construction debris. Reus created the images by climbing into construction skips in her hometown of the Hague in the Netherlands, positioning fruits among the demolished drywall and splintered floorboards in front of buildings under renovation. In some of these works, purple cabbage sections spell out the names of the months in English. By fusing immaculate fruits and vegetables and the refuse of refurbishment, Reus calls attention to questions of nature and artifice, humanity’s selective breeding and genetic modification of fruits and vegetables, and—in the *memento mori* spirit of the still-life genre—the ephemerality of life amid the changing seasons.

Always attuned to the material presence of her images, Reus embeds her “Landings” photographs into sculptural frames of powder-coated aluminum. Each pigment print is layered over a cropped and desaturated image of a childhood painting: a self portrait of Reus standing in carefully balanced greenery. The coated steel frame carries letters and numbers welded onto its sides along with swatches of tarpaulin and twirled lengths of wire. The letters and numbers convey abbreviations of months and the miles traveled by the crop depicted from its place of harvest to its consumer. Through abbreviation and initializing these meanings become obscured.

And Orchard underscores the artist’s characteristic precision and diligence in craft, and her ability to conjoin far-flung concepts through metonymy and insinuation. With her eye for material formalism and a trickster’s sleight of hand, Reus brings us into her vision of an urban orchard, a space and an image of continual construction where portraiture and still life intertwine and illumination comes not as light but language.

Magali Reus (b. 1981, The Hague, Netherlands) lives and works in London. Her solo exhibition *A Sentence in Soil* is currently on view at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, one of many museum exhibitions to feature her work in recent years. Others include South London Gallery; Bergen Kunsthall; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; The Hepworth Wakefield; and SculptureCenter, New York. Forthcoming solo exhibitions include Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Ghent, Belgium; CAC Synagogue de Delme, France; and Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Germany. Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including Tate Britain, London; ICA, London; CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Kunsthalle Bern; Kunstmuseum Winterthur and Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon. Reus’s work is held in public collections around the world, including Tate Britain, Stedelijk Museum, Hepworth Wakefield, Lafayette Anticipations, Hessel Collection, and Rubell Museum. She was shortlisted for the Hepworth Prize for Sculpture in 2018 and won the Prix de Rome in 2015. *And Orchard* is her first exhibition at François Ghebaly.