

**Claudia Comte**

***Home Sweet Home***

Curated by Ben Broome

Vistamare, Milano

Opening April 10, 2024, 6.30 – 9.30pm

April 11 – June 8, 2024

Vistamare is pleased to present ***Home Sweet Home***, a solo exhibition of works by Claudia Comte.

Exhibiting sculpture and painting amongst an ambitious site specific installation *Home Sweet Home* initiates a physical connection between Vistamare's Milan gallery and the hills behind Basel where Comte lives and works; clashing the natural environment in which the works were made with the metropolitan site of exhibition.

Central to the exhibition are a series of sculptural works carved in 2023, the mother of which was a single ancient Sequoia tree that fell near the artist's home. *Francesca*, the tallest of the three siblings in the central room, reaches over three metres in height and is carved from a single piece of wood, taking the form of her maternal Sequoia leaf. The artist finds her sculptural works to take on anthropomorphic qualities in their conception, each having distinct personalities that direct Comte in the naming of the works: after friends, family & colleagues. Comte's polished forms are reminiscent of coral, cacti & foliage, linking local European biomes with those of deserts or reefs and continuing the artist's exploration into the delicate equilibriums of the natural world and the man-made decline of these ecosystems.

Historically, the exhibition of Comte's works have reflected the environments in which they are shown: her 2023 exhibition at Casa Wabi, Oaxaca *From Where We Rise* was produced entirely with soil and clay from the region, utilising local materials for a series of ceramics and murals. *Home Sweet Home* Comte instead exhibits work in direct opposition to the exhibition's locality; covering the expanse of the gallery with soil taken from the artist's own garden. From the earth and of the earth, the site-specific installation *Earth Work* (2024) exists in stark contrast to the metropolis of Milan; marrying once again Comte's wooden forms with the ground in which they grew.

Horizontal earth and vertical sculpture conjoin in the wall works on show. These are readable as paintings but, in place of pigment, the artist uses soil (also from Comte's garden). Earth stands to attention on these canvases - the soil meticulously arranged in oscillations mirroring nature's own patterns and processes. Much like the contradiction between the white walls of Vistamare and the dark earth blanketing the floor, an incongruity exists between the white canvas substrate and the dark rich soil it carries.

The use of earth as an artistic medium was popularised by the Italian Arte Povera movement in 1960's Italy and concurrently in the US with the conception of land art but, where genre-defining works (such as Walter De Maria's *Earth Room*) are minimalist and nonconfrontational in their spatial aesthetics, *Home Sweet Home* is maximalist and adversarial. The horizontal lines of the floor level earth are interrupted by the verticality of the sculptural works and paintings. Through *Earth Work* (2024) the artist necessitates physical contact between the earth and one's feet; a gesture that completes the artist's invitation to consider one's own position both as a participant in the artwork and in the fraught relationship between nature and humankind.

- Ben Broome

**Claudia Comte** (b. 1983, Grancy) is a Swiss artist based in Basel, Switzerland. Her practice is guided by a longstanding interest in teasing out the history and memory of biomorphic forms through traditional hand processes, industrial and machine technologies. Comte's site-specific installations bring together monumental wall paintings and sculptures playfully inspired by organic patterns and morphology, paying testament to the intelligence and transformative capacities of the ecological world. Her work has been widely presented in solo and group exhibitions, including Solo Summer Group Show III, Solo Houses, Matarraña (2023), Cacti, Waves and Sunsets, Globus Public Art Project in collaboration with Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2023), From Where We Rise, Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Mexico 2023, Through Dry Ocean Forests, Albarran Bourdais, Madrid (2022), An Impending Disaster (HAHAHA), König Galerie im KHK Wien (2022), Tree Line Curve, Rolex Learning Center, EPFL Lausanne (2021), The Dreamers, 58th October Salon, Belgrade Biennale (2021), After Nature, Museo Nacional Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid (2021), Jungle and Corals, König Galerie, Berlin (2021), The Sea of Darkness, Kunstraum Dornbirn (2020), How to Grow and Still Stay the Same Shape, Castello di Rivoli, Torino (2019), I have Grown Taller from Standing with Trees, Copenhagen Contemporary (2019), Zigzags and Diagonals, MOCA Cleveland (2018), among others.

### Information

Claudia Comte

*Home Sweet Home*

April 11 - June 8, 2024

### Opening hours

Tuesday – Saturday: 10.30am – 7pm

Monday: 10am - 7pm Offices and by appointment

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