

Elmgreen & Dragset

October 8 – November 15, 2020

68 Park Place

East Hampton, New York



Left: Elmgreen & Dragset, *Black Socks*, 2019 © Elmgreen & Dragset, courtesy of Pace Gallery; Right: Elmgreen & Dragset, *Doubt*, 2019 © Elmgreen & Dragset, courtesy of Pace Gallery

Pace Gallery is pleased to announce Berlin-based artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset's first exhibition with the gallery since joining Pace in June 2020. On view October 8 – November 15, 2020 at Pace's location in East Hampton, the presentation will feature five recent and new works as well as an offsite outdoor sculptural installation. Viewers are invited to create their own narratives, responding to implied actions and emotions suggested in the selection of works, where traces of presence and absence are finely balanced and where gestures both bold and intimate are interwoven.

Among the most renowned and widely exhibited artists in Europe, Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961, Copenhagen) and Ingar Dragset (b. 1969, Trondheim, Norway) challenge and readdress how art is presented and experienced with an often playful and subversive approach. The artist duo pursues complex questions of identity, sexuality, and belonging in their work. Often radically re-contextualizing everyday objects or transforming exhibition spaces into unexpected new environments, Elmgreen & Dragset draw on both lived experience and the context in which their works are shown. 2020 marks the 25th year of their collaboration, which has continued to call into question established power structures in society and deal with fundamental, existential questions.

On view in the exhibition is *Couple, Fig. 19* (2019), part of an ongoing series of paired diving boards, which exemplifies this play with perception—shifting the role of the object by removing it from its functional setting

and calling into question the significance of environment. The materiality of the work also defies the immediate reading of it as readymades, as each element is crafted by hand. Since their first diving board sculpture in 1997, the motif of a swimming pool has frequently appeared in their work. One key example was their 2016 installation *Van Gogh's Ear* at the Fifth Avenue entrance of the Channel Gardens at Rockefeller Center in New York, which featured a large ear-shaped pool structure with an iconic, cyan-blue interior, lights, a diving board, and a stainless-steel ladder. Similarly, the duo's *Bent Pool* (2019)—the 20-foot-tall installation in Pride Park outside the Miami Beach Convention Center—takes the form of an oval pool, bent upright into an inverted U-shape.

Elmgreen & Dragset's *Black Socks* (2019) subverts traditional notions of objectification and desire. The visual appearance of this sculpture responds to Peter Hujar's black and white photograph *Christopher Street Pier #2 (Crossed Legs)* (1976) in both form and color. The position of the crossed legs of the sculpture is drawn directly from the subject in Hujar's iconic work, and the colors of the sculpture mimic the black-and-white tonality of the photographer's image. Just as queer experiences play a profound role in the work of Elmgreen & Dragset, Hujar's work frequently and powerfully captured queer life in New York City.

As part of the presentation Pace will also show *Short Story* (2020), a new outdoor installation situated on a tennis court incorporating two figurative bronze sculptures of young boys following the conclusion of a tennis match—one victorious, the other defeated. The expressions of the figures invite viewers to call into question the idea of competition and its reverberations in society, and more broadly the nuanced notion of situational fairness and outcomes. This installation will be available for viewing by appointment only.

Tied to the exhibition, Pace will also debut a conversation between Elmgreen & Dragset and friend, collaborator, and fellow Pace artist Fred Wilson as an introduction to the gallery's global audience. More details will be announced soon.

Pace's presentation will coincide with Elmgreen & Dragset's new solo exhibition, *2020*, at EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art in Finland. On view September 25, 2020 through January 17, 2021, the exhibition features a selection of site-specific, new, and familiar sculptures by the artists, presented together in a format that transforms Finland's largest museum into a surreal car park, incorporating real cars, road markings, and a selection of Elmgreen & Dragset sculptures—several of which are seen for the first time. The melancholic, half abandoned parking lot that makes up the exhibition seems to beg the question: What will happen to intimacy after 2020, a year of social distancing and heightened fear of sharing physical space?

Other recent solo exhibitions include *Elmgreen & Dragset: Sculptures* at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas, which was presented from September 2019 – January 2020 and marked the artists' first major museum presentation in the U.S. Installed throughout the interior and exterior spaces of the Nasher, the

works on view exemplified the artists' use of multiple aesthetics and working methods, and drew upon Minimalism, conceptual strategies, and the figurative sculpture tradition.

Elmgreen & Dragset will be on view at Pace in East Hampton during the gallery's opening hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM to 5 PM; Sunday 12 PM – 4 PM; and Monday and Tuesday by appointment.

Elmgreen & Dragset have been described as subtly infiltrating art institutions from the inside with their critical gaze, frequently using museum and gallery architecture as both subject and material, laying bare the social and cultural systems that expose the fiction of neutrality trafficked by the white cube. "...But instead of using the traditional methods of institutional critique we rather change the identity and the actual physical appearance of the white cube" says Dragset. Elmgreen & Dragset have used such a strategy on numerous occasions. At UCCA in Beijing they turned the vast exhibition hall into a whole art fair mimicking a conventional fair layout with gallery booths in a fishbone grid, a café, a bookstore and an information desk, but only displaying works by themselves which were not for sale. In Seoul, Elmgreen & Dragset turned Samsung Museum of Art's venue Plateau into a dysfunctional airport, and outside Marfa, Texas, they erected perhaps their most well-known project: *Prada Marfa*, a forever closed luxury boutique in the middle of the Texan desert.

Elmgreen & Dragset have produced several public sculptures, often addressing tensions between public and private, intimacy and alienation, power and powerlessness. Such projects include The Mayor of London's Commission for the Fourth Plinth in London's Trafalgar Square in 2012, a temporary installation for which they created a bronze figure of a boy on a toy rocking horse. The infantilized figure offered a humorous counterpoint to the militarized masculinity of equestrian statuary, epitomized by the sculpture of King George IV that famously sits on the plinth opposite. Their *Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime* was commissioned by the German federal Government in 2008 and is permanently located in Berlin's Tiergarten next to the Holocaust Memorial.

In 2017, Elmgreen & Dragset curated the Istanbul Biennial. In 2015, they received an honorary doctorate from NTNU, Norwegian University of Science and Technology. For the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009, the artists curated and staged *The Collectors*, an exhibition in the Danish and Nordic Pavilions that transformed the pavilions into a domestic living space inhabited by an art collector and featured works by 24 artists. In 2002 the duo won the German art prize Preis der Nationalgalerie and in 2000 they were shortlisted for Guggenheim Museum's Hugo Boss Prize.

Elmgreen & Dragset's most recent monographic publications include: *Elmgreen & Dragset* published by Phaidon, 2019; *Sculptures* published by Hatje Cantz and Nasher Sculpture Center, 2019; and *This Is How We Bite our Tongue* published by The Whitechapel Gallery, 2018.

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery enters its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by a drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances and interdisciplinary projects through Pace Live, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide: two galleries in New York—including its newly opened headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street—as well as galleries in Palo Alto, London, Geneva, Hong Kong, and Seoul. In July 2020 Pace opened a temporary gallery space in East Hampton, New York that will be programmed through October 2021. Additionally, the gallery's seasonal exhibition space in Palm Beach will be open from early November 2020 through spring 2021.

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