



Caroline Larsen: Cyclades

Brooklyn-based painter Caroline Larsen returns to Dio Horia for her second residency and solo show with the gallery, featuring new works created during, and inspired by, her stay on Mykonos.

In recent years, Larsen has developed a signature technique of applying thick layers of paint on the canvas, using not the traditional tools of a painter but by squeezing oil paint through plastic bags. She has deployed this technique to dramatic visual effect and using a wide range of subjects, from images of burning cars billowing black smoke to flamboyant floral compositions and humorous references to the history of Western art.

Larsen's recent work for Dio Horia stems from her own research in psychedelic visuals and kitsch, combined with Greek-culture clichés from ancient and modern times. The exhibition Cyclades includes a group of paintings from her Still Life series that fuse pop culture with art-history references — deliberately using the banal subject of "still life with flowers" as a starting point to create new, witty narratives with a present-day edge. Vases filled with explosions of flowers are set against psychedelic backgrounds, their bodies decorated with unexpected images: a Conquistador-era world map, ancient Greek illustrations and a tongue-in-cheek mashup of Dalí and the Simpsons.

During her residency, the artist has created eight new paintings that continue her Still Life concept. The works depict either actual ancient Greek vases she encountered in museums with symbolic and mythological imagery, or copies sold as tourist souvenirs online. Two of the works reference contemporary Mykonos itself and the island's fame as a lifestyle and holiday destination.

Part of the exhibition Cyclades is also a new series of pool paintings; these are a continuation of the artist's Pool Houses series, whereby she paints extravagant modernist Californian villas as a commentary on the lifestyle that surrounds them and the status they symbolize. Larsen's new Mykonos Pools paintings draw a comparison between luxury Cycladic villas and modernist American ones, and are also a nod to Le Corbusier's admiration for Mykonian architecture (expressed during the legendary architect's visit to the island in 1939).

— Caroline Larsen (born 1980, Toronto, Canada) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She has an undergraduate degree from the University of Waterloo and a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Pratt Institute. She has presented 22 solo exhibitions and has participated in numerous group shows across Canada, America and Germany. She has been the recipient of grants from the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council, she has received Merit Based Scholarship and the Calrow Memorial Scholarship to study at Pratt Institute. Her work is part of collections in Canada, USA and Lebanon.