

ANDERS
WAHLSTEDT
FINE ART

Liv Mette Larsen

Nightview

February 17 - April 2, 2022



Vertical Night View VI, 2018

Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art is pleased to present *Nightview*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Liv Mette Larsen. Born in 1952 in Norway, Larsen now lives and works in Bushwick, Brooklyn. The exhibition consists of nineteen paintings, all done using egg tempera on linen. Selected works on paper by the artist will be on view in the gallery's back room.

"Larsen has long preferred buildings, often variably industrial, as her subject matter. Factories, warehouses, water towers, and silos are among the structures in her customary wheelhouse, and she depicts them individually or paired ("Vertical Night View IV," "Small Night View XI"), or at times in small groups ("Night View VII," "Night View XIII"). Landscapes they are, skylines they are - but then again, not really. 'Buildingscapes' describes them better; 'building portraits' hits even closer to home. The artist's structures appear to us as shapes and as sitters, as 'formal' casts of posing characters, as blocky individuals with personalities and moods. Like bottles for Morandi, Larsen's buildings transcend their objectness to embody certain qualities not always granted to objects: simplicity and humility, honesty and sympathy, and wistful, whispery curiousness.

Industrial structures as actors poised before ambient backdrops: thusly set is Larsen's stage. If *Nightview* were in fact a play, it would be set in the warehouse district of Bushwick, Brooklyn, where the artist has kept a home and studio for many years, around which are situated all of the buildings portrayed in the exhibit. We see them much the way Larsen sees

them when looking out her windows at night, lights low, registering notes for new works. Their compositional quiet and calm echo the calm quiet of their inception. Larsen achieves this tenor by depicting her subjects as silhouettes, in hues generally dark, before open skies, generally monotone. Her buildings range from near-blacks to blues, greens, and reds; her night skies, from deep purples to warm oranges and bright yellows. The artist peers out her windows into the roof of the night, and at the shadowed buildings that commune beneath it, then furnishes surfaces with rooftop contours and nocturnally luminous atmospherics.

Larsen works slowly and deliberately, more like a caretaker than an engineer. She mixes her own egg tempera colors using finely ground raw pigments, and she applies them skillfully and meticulously to linen surfaces of generally modest size, both horizontal and vertical. She works without tape, without rulers, allowing the gradual, experienced movement of her hand and brushes to create lines that are straight enough, washes of color that are consistent enough. Her applications are typically thin, such that the tooth of the linen remains readily visible; this serves to soften the contours of the structures and nimbly variegate the expanse of their backdrops. Her lines are carefully formed and angled, though never rightly rectilinear or rigid. As such, her buildings appear settled, weathered, used. Her largely monochromatic skies, meanwhile - now deep, now vivid; now darker, now brighter - take up the subtle textures of her surfaces, leaving her backgrounds grainy and striated, her ambient lights diffused....Abstractions indeed, to be sure, yet Larsen's painstakingly rendered paintings and collages nonetheless register very real buildings in a very real place, staged and staid like actors before a curtain, or like precious objects in a display case. The varicolored diffusions looming luminously all around these forms, meanwhile, are analogously convincing as the bizarrely real lights of industrially peripheral metropolitan nights."

- Excerpt from "Rooftops, Nights, Lights: Liv Mette Larsen's *Nightview* at Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art" by Paul D'Agostino

An opening reception will be held on Thursday, February 17, from 5pm - 8pm. A catalogue has been produced to accompany the exhibition.

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Liv Mette Larsen (b.1952, Oslo, Norway) is a painter working out of Brooklyn, NY, whose work has been exhibited throughout the U.S. and Europe at venues such as the Kunstverein Marburg, Germany; Kunstmuseum Lüdenscheid, Germany; Trafo Kunsthall, Norway. Her work is held in private and public collections around the U.S. and Europe.