

Veronica Brovall, Expose the bait

What is the use of art? Many artists, art critics and art lovers have tried to answer this question. For some, works of art are a thing of beauty; for others, they are a social statement or the expression of creative energy. Veronica Brovall is not the kind of artist that wants to announce the great truths about art in rhetorical propositions. Yet the title of her exhibition in Hopstreet, Expose The Bait, is a possible clue to her interpretation of the meaning of art.

The sculptures in glazed ceramics that Veronica Brovall unites under the title Expose The Bait form a coherent ensemble due to several recurring motifs. The artist appeals to our imagination when she combines hands with the thumb extended upward, tongues, goblets, chains and the words 'Fuck here' and reuses these motifs frequently. Due to their shape, colour, and texture, the sculptures look like baked chaos, rustic and uncontrolled. Yet their titles and the motifs used suggest all kinds of associations. The artist prefers that her sculptures generate a very direct effect without imposing a concrete message or interpretation on the observer.

Even though different sculptures stand together in one space, each statue is an attention-grabber in its own right. The challenging tongues on some pieces play a seductive role while giant hands with virile thumbs show how fun it all is. The 'Fuck here' reference seems to lend an explicit sexual connotation to the holes with different diameters that appear in the sculptures. She incidentally tackles the respectable image of fragile ceramics and feminist viewpoints related to sexual ethics with lots of humour. Veronica Brovall is resolutely opposed to the minimalist adage "What you see is what you get". She gives much more than what you can see, just like bait is only a means to lure something into action. When you look at things this way, works of art must be the tempting bait in Brovall's world. However, the unavoidable question that arises is: which imminent danger can be hidden behind this bait?

Since Veronica Brovall uses impulses from our society (especially youth culture) and converts them into very direct and active imagery, her works appeal to everyone. She does not work in a moralising manner; on the contrary she boosts those impulses in order to intensify the experience. In the Facebook era, a 'Like' thumbs up has become symbolic for an opinion. In Brovall's sculptures they are magnified in such a way that they become grotesque exaggerations that appear whether they are relevant or not. The same is true of the recurring words 'Fuck here'.

Veronica Brovall converts the energy and vitality of our modern reality into images that, in turn, generate a new energy – the power of imagination. Just like a boomerang, her work returns smack into your face with twice as much strength.

Tanguy Eeckhout