

LILY VAN DER STOKKER

What is it

September 18–October 29, 2022

Parker Gallery is proud to present *What is it*, a solo exhibition by Lily van der Stokker. Lily van der Stokker has been making wall paintings and drawings since the 1980s, a time in which she also operated an art gallery in New York's East Village, sharing a street with influential gallerists Colin de Land and Pat Hearn. Upon the closure of her gallery in 1986, van der Stokker has focused on making her own artwork, positioning the social context of art production at the forefront of her practice. In appearance, van der Stokker's work can recall the bubbly, fanciful doodles found in the margins of a diary. Often accompanied by text, the cheerful colors and soft shapes are disarming in their immediacy, belying the radicalness of forefronting a 'female' aesthetic often dismissed as frivolous. In a 2010 interview with John Waters, van der Stokker remarked, "Sweetness as subject matter is still really hard to get for many people. It's tricky because the work looks simple. I would love to make art that's understandable by everybody...but over the years, I think I'm doing complicated things."

For this exhibition, van der Stokker reevaluates her own practice, the creative process, and the role of art itself. Following two years of archival research, van der Stokker has re-made and updated several drawings from the 1990s. These abstract works appear spontaneous, yet are the product of decades of revision; their current presentation a supplement to the cheeriness of the artist's well known decorative visuals. A large-scale wall work, *How about this* (1996–2022)–presented at Parker Gallery as a wall painting for the first time–anchors the exhibition and epitomizes the artist's prosaic approach. Lozenge-like shapes rendered in soft pinks and oranges are accompanied by the ambiguous text "how about this" drawn from everyday speech. The image itself is joyful in form, accessible yet indecipherable in its abstraction, while the text undercuts the perceived ease of simple visuals. The work challenges the idea of truth in both the image and text, presenting honesty and wonderment simultaneously.

Lily van der Stokker (born Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, 1954) lives and works in Amsterdam and New York City. Selected solo exhibitions include: Camden Art Centre, London (2022); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2019); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2018); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2015); New Museum, New York (2013); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010); and Tate St. Ives (2010). Van der Stokker has undertaken two large-scale public commissions. In 2000 she created *The Pink Building*, for which she painted the entire exterior and roof of a building for the World's Fair in Hannover, Germany, and she designed a large ceramic teapot, *Celestial Teapot*, for the roof of a high-rise shopping centre in Utrecht, Netherlands, in 2013.