

KEVIN FRANCIS GRAY

10 March – 15 April 2022

Curated by Sara Lysgaard

Rentemestervej 49, 2400 Copenhagen, Denmark

Andersen's is pleased to present the second solo show in Scandinavia by Irish sculptor Kevin Francis Gray: to mark his return to Copenhagen after curating a group show at Andersen's in the spring 2017, and solo in 2018, Gray re-immerses himself in the new space to introduce recent works.

Italian marble stands as the cornerstone of Kevin Francis Gray's oeuvre - forming the lynchpin of his solo exhibition at Andersen's in Spring 2022. Inheriting the material's historic and cultural legacies, as well as evoking its academic canons, the starting point of Gray's artistic practice could hardly sound more traditional. Materials such as clay, plaster, and marble and techniques including modelling, casting, and carving honour the old-fashioned praxis of manual craft and sculpture. By re-contextualising the classical *modus operandi* into the contemporary, Gray celebrates the tradition of sculpture whilst favouring a forward-looking approach. He works to shift the focus from gazing back at art history to the way we look towards its future. For Gray, marble has become the springboard to explore new ventures with the stone. Without leaving behind the artisanal component of the artistic process, he progresses and evolves with it. By exploring its possibilities in terms of colours (white, grey, black, yellow, green, etc.), texture, and shapes, Gray confronts the material's potential with a curious and modern attitude. The artist transcends marble's innate features of hardness and stillness, defeating its nature and the physicality of the process, succeeding at breathing life into the stone, unearthing shapes and emotions that are buried within the block. Forms trace back to their fluid state, surfaces flow in an alternation of concave and convex movements - they are in a state of becoming. These new works further assert Gray as a master of marble as a medium.

The exhibition will showcase new works that - under the glare of personal and world events of recent years - mould into this movement and shape around two core concepts: breakdown and transition. The breakdown of global systems and their automatisms have impacted human behavior and this energy is embedded in Gray's latest *Breakdown Series*. By physically deconstructing materials and re-assembling them into composite sculptures, the artist opens his sculptural praxis to a wide range of new media. The dialogue of materials is a stark departure from past exhibitions. Incorporating steel, concrete, and wood, Gray positioned himself as a multi-hyphenate sculptor, who imbues subtlety and with sensitivity in the spaces his works occupy, transitioning the plinth as an integral part of the sculpture; gender transitioning, presenting gender-fluids models, in the midst of a metamorphosis, which recognises them with a sense of anonymity and universality; transitioning from past to present, from the ideal to the real. Gray's work feels to be in the throes of an intriguing transition. He moves his works to a different stage, both sculpturally and intellectually, with a greater expressive style and a distinctive psychological perspective. The works presented in this exhibition are intimately linked to a period of intense self-reflection in the artist's personal life: Gray approaches this show with serenity, open to sharing moments of fragility, doubt, and faltering.

He received his BA from the National College of Art & Design in Dublin (1995) and the School of Art Institute in Chicago (1996) before going on to earn his MA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College in London. He works closely with the Giannoni marble studio in Pietrasanta, renown for its use of sculpting techniques dating back to Canova and Michelangelo.