

Katarina Riesing

Razor Burn

January 9 - February 15, 2020



Asya Geisberg Gallery is pleased to present “Razor Burn”, an exhibition of paintings on stretched silk and colored pencil drawings by **Katarina Riesing**. This will be the artist’s first New York solo exhibition. At first glance the work’s infatuation with laborious detail and rich material - especially in the hand-embroidered gold thread, use of silk, or the exquisitely-rendered swirls of patterned stocking - seem inspired by a northern Renaissance luxuriance. Yet Riesing’s insistence on close croppings, and sometimes awkward, unsightly (i.e. the show’s title) or uncomfortably erotic aspects of the body, reveal surreptitious squirming. Even when we are turned on, we feel perhaps that we shouldn’t be watching. The confrontational intimacy of such compositions is paradoxically reserved, as Riesing leaves plenty unsaid in her otherwise recognizable depictions. In a few images, hands reach out to grab a thigh or nipple, and we never know the relationship or gender - is it self-love, an erotic caress, or possessive grab?



Grabby 2, 2019
Dye on silk crepe de chine
20h x 19w in

The paintings are made with dye on silk, a surface both akin to skin and a symbol of delicacy, sensuality, and opulence. To witness its desecration with these alarmingly realistic excavations of the body’s imperfections - its moles, rashes, or scars - is at once unsettling and pleasantly subversive. Riesing’s drawings and paintings often have a play-within-a-play quality, where other forms of imagery are wittily in focus - tattoos of bodies, bra straps that look like a bridge, negative spaces that suggest caves or sunsets, patterns that form drawing within drawings, sheer garments that create a screen or veil. Flattening occurs often and causes spatial confusions, as when legs kick like denuded Rockettes, or collapse on each other like so many apexes.

Riesing’s drawings are quieter but no less powerfully precise or oddly bewitching than the paintings. With layers of small marks in colored pencil and ballpoint pen, they betray the same love of labor that the paintings show, with their painstaking embroidery suggesting microscopic chainmail or glinting finery. With influences as disparate as Christina Ramberg, Sarah Lucas, or Ghada Amer, and imagery from medical illustrations of skin disease, to prison tattoos, stock photography, and panty hose labels, Riesing has reinvigorated our relationship to the body: its folds and contorsions, its bumpy topographies and filigreed coverings. Her intimate imagery burrows within our psyche, and allows us to question our own response to the body’s in turn grotesque, absurd, and sensual aspects.



Double Back, 2019
Colored pencil and ballpoint pen on paper
14h x 11w in

Katarina Riesing was born in Knoxville, TN and lives and works in Alfred, NY, where she also teaches at Alfred University. She received a BA from Smith College, Northampton, MA, and an MA and an MFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Solo exhibitions include Seligmann Center for the Arts, Chester, NY, SoHo20 Gallery, NY, and group exhibitions include Kristin Lorello Gallery, NY, New Discretions, NY, Field Projects, NY, Spring/Break NY, and Bertrand Productions, Philadelphia, PA. She has been awarded residencies at Saltonstall, Cite International des Arts Residency, Paris, Icelandic Textile Center, Vermont Studio Center, and New York Artist Residency and Studio Foundation (NARS). Riesing was also featured in the exhibition “Ariadne Unraveling” at Asya Geisberg Gallery in June 2019.