

## **Chests**

**Clara Busch**

25 April – 17 May 2025

The word “chest” is a homonym that points towards the upper part of the human torso, as well as a strong wooden box used for transport– often containing valuable objects or important information. In each case, a hardened exterior structure is adapted to protect vital organs or other treasures hidden inside. In the plural form, “chests” hints at bodies coming together or a sequence of vessels, needed to contain an increasingly abundant resource. This exhibition presents a series of new pastel drawings by Clara Busch, developing her interest in abstract visual language as a way of expressing bodily experience beyond the limitations of text.

Busch's compositions read as fleshy, organic, floral and offer complex formulations of pictorial space. In these works, forms split, warp, collapse and mutate. All the while ambiguous effects relating to light, depth, density and transparency make it hard to orient oneself within these images and to distinguish individual shapes from the hazy atmosphere that surrounds them. Forms bleed into one another, contained as they are within wooden box frames.

Texture plays an important role in this body of work. In previous projects, Busch has often incorporated textiles into stretched wall-hung structures, or used them as the basis for sculptural castings to explore how recognisable surfaces become loaded with contextual meaning. In these drawings, Busch opts for a texture that feels soft and fluid, allowing forms to shift and develop in a way that is consistently dynamic and avoids fixed resolve.

The chest, muscle mass, breast tissue and the way one carries this part of the body often impact how we read a person's identity or their attitude and intentions in a given social setting. Erotic but not reproductive, the chest is a site of intimacy and profound affective experience. Whether they are feelings of love, or deep pain or sadness, intense emotional stirring is often experienced from a place that feels buried inside the chest cavity.

The small scale of these drawings, along with their expressive, and at times hallucinogenic palettes, situates them in the realm of the psychological or the subconscious. At the same time, Busch's distinctly biomorphic style emphasises the connection between body and environment. Pastels are made of powdered pigment that is held together with a binder; there is something about this makeup of small particles that parallels the underlying atomic structure for all living things. In this way, the artist's choice of medium feels perfectly appropriate to explore the ways in which organisms absorb, infiltrate and exchange with their surroundings, mutually exerting influence and constantly changing in the process.

**Clara Busch** (b. 1991, Copenhagen; DK) is a visual artist based in Copenhagen, Denmark. The artist graduated with an MFA from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2022. *Chests* marks the artist's first solo exhibition with OTP Copenhagen.