

Midway Contemporary Art

B. Ingrid Olson

A Masculine Thought

November 22, 2025–February 7, 2026

Midway Contemporary Art is pleased to present *A Masculine Thought*, an exhibition by B. Ingrid Olson.

The exhibition includes two artworks: *Fraternal Canon (What I would be if I wasn't what I am before I was I)*, n.d. and *A Feminine Thought*, 2007-2025. First exhibited in June 2025 at Kunstverein Braunschweig and conceived of as a Gesamtkunstwerk, or “total artwork”, *A Feminine Thought*¹ was spread across the first floor of the Villa Salve Hospes, fluidly filling the eight rooms with the sole artwork. Gesamtkunstwerk, or “total artwork”, is a work of art or other constructed experience that combines as many mediums as possible into a coherent whole. Popularized (and problematized) by the composer Richard Wagner, the principles of the Gesamtkunstwerk are often embodied by architecture, with practitioners such as Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright controlling every element of their buildings.

For Midway, Olson has reconfigured and translated the large-scale artwork in response to the present architectural situation. Condensed not only into a single room, but into one half of the gallery space, the installation’s 527 tabletops are stacked directly on the floor into a tight and dense configuration, backed up against a long wall. The black laminate panels are scaled to the dimensions of every artwork made by the artist to date. A kind of shadow oeuvre, these rectilinear surrogates actually and metaphorically support an array of sculptural forms, drawings, and assemblage.

Grafted onto the existing steel beam that bisects Midway’s gallery space, Olson has installed four steel and fogged-glass partitions which simulate the transition between an interior and exterior space. 70 small photographic collages are scattered and taped across the interior surface of the glass. An installation of steel light fixtures, *Fraternal Canon (What I would be if I wasn't what I am before I was I)*, n.d., distantly backlights the photographic elements. In the liminal ‘outside’, the lights theatrically perform as artificial sunlight.

¹ *A Feminine Thought* “refers to a work by Dieter Roth: *Ein weiblicher Gedanke I & II (A Feminine Thought)*, an edition of two prints. On one, a woman is transformed step-by-step into a table; on the other, the transformation takes place in reverse order. Olson reacts to this objectification and reification of the female body and counters it by complicating rather than controlling the spatial situation. Even if the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk is historically linked to a targeted guidance of the audience’s experience, the artist is not interested in prescribing any particular perception. Rather, she points out that every experience remains subjective—shaped by an individual’s temperament and personal perspective. Olson’s sensitivity to psychological states and the psychologization of space is fed, among other things, by her examination of the historical neglect of both the psychic and mental health of women. This is contrasted with the conscious visualization of a deep-rooted, almost hysterical impulse to produce and reproduce in her work. *A Feminine Thought* is an open-ended work that depicts a thought process as being in-process [...] Many of the objects presented appear as drafts or models—snapshots of a state that can still develop further. The installation questions whether the elements of a Gesamtkunstwerk do actually have to illustrate a unified, controlled concept—one that is geared towards aesthetic order, wholeness, and unity—or whether it can instead be understood as a pluralistic, fragmentary, contradictory system.” (Cathrin Mayer, Kunstverein Braunschweig)

B. Ingrid Olson (b. 1987, Denver, CO) is an artist based in Chicago. Engaging the reciprocities between photography, sculpture and architecture, Olson stages a manifold approach to plurality, gender, and power. Her artworks and installations poetically test the capacities of the artist's body, viewers' bodies as well as the architectural conditions of exhibition sites in order to call attention to both the psychological and physical structuring of the spaces around us. Solo exhibitions of her work have been held at venues including Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany; fluent, Santander, Spain; Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge, MA; Secession, Vienna, Austria; and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY. Olson's work was included in the 2024 Whitney Biennial. In 2025, she was named a Guggenheim Fellow.

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Andy warhol

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