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Elena Alonso, *Diseño para un cuerpo voluptuoso (3)*, 2020, mixed media on paper, 75 x 54".
ZÜRICH

Elena Alonso

FABIAN LANG GALLERY
Obere Zäune 12
June 12–July 31, 2020

In her first solo show outside of Spain, Elena Alonso condenses the main concerns of her hybrid practice (halfway between painting and sculpture, ornament and architecture) by playing off of the venue's four central pillars. Two of them, joined by means of a U-curve at the base, become a humorously awkward gallery bench. The other two merge into a kind of plinth that seems to rest, or about to glide over, a set of walnut spheres and ovoids polished until they appear almost fleshy and soft—examples of the technical facility on display since her first shows and her site-specific interventions at Matadero or CA2M in Madrid. Around these ambiguous structures hang seven big mixed media works on paper

from a series titled “Designs for a Voluptuous Body,” 2020. The incisions in the skin-like surfaces of these abstracted “bodies” seem at once seductive and cold-shouldered, organic and mechanized. Their painstakingly refined hand-made finishing merges eerily with the smoothnesses and finesses of graphic design while perhaps critiquing such sanitized aesthetics. Imbued with personal meaning and *personalities*, these designs invite a kind of rational-sensorial hyper-synesthesia that blends the mineral and the organic, the human and the nonhuman, discarding or reevaluating separated notions of “natural” and “artificial.” They might very well serve as illustrations of a particularly lavish edition of *The Writing of Stones* or any other text by that arch-dissident and heretic of postwar European avant-gardes, Roger Caillois: As in his subtle and enigmatic writings, in her work imminence and absence meet at an opening of future paths. In doing so, they quietly announce Alonso as one of Spain’s most interesting young artists.

— Javier Montes