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Fotograf Gallery

THE NEVER-ENDING EGG

Erica Curci, Lukáš Hofmann,  
Pedro Neves Marques & HAUT,  
Johana Pošová, Marie Tučková

30. 6. – 27. 8. 2022

***The Never-Ending Egg* explores – and celebrates! – the potential of bodies (and, thus, of identities) to change, morph and reinvent themselves.**

**It does so by bringing together a constellation of works that look at the material bodies are made of – flakes of skin, lumps of flesh, cellular tissue, as well as the complex social constructions that turn all these organic components into actual sentient beings – as a territory of experimentation and manipulation.**

**The catalyst that prompted the development of this exhibition is *cultured meat*, i.e. meat that can be grown by in vitro cell cultures, rather than obtained by killing animals, with a technology borrowed from tissue-engineering techniques. Cultured meat is often described as *the* solution to the environmental, ethical and economical problems posed by traditional animal farming. However, apart from its yet-to-be-proven benefits, cultured meat does indeed attempt to normalize the idea that meat can be produced, at home, by everyone. If, in a not-too-distant-future, we could imagine producing our burgers at home, we could also speculate about the possibility of manufacturing other types of meat – for instance, the flesh our human bodies are made of. In essence, cultivated meat then becomes a metaphor for our ability to manipulate and morph our bodies and identities, and to participate in their production.**

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**With a bit of a fictional stretch, and a good dose of speculation, *The Never-Ending Egg* then looks at the making and unmaking of bodies and identities, through the reproduction, fabrication and extraction of biological matter. Playing with the fluidity between the naturally procreated and the artificially engineered, the works on display articulate bodies and identities as territorial building materials.**

***The Polyphonic Womb, Marie Tučková, 2022***

sound, installation

As is typical of many of her works, here, Marie is elaborating the motif of celebrating the female body as a source of creativity endowed with an indomitable will and strength to resist any kind of oppression. Merging music and poetry, she invites us to settle comfortably in an intimate (architectural as well as discursive) space meant for encounters, listening, reading, and asks us to enjoy the Polyphonic Womb as a space in which the songs are born.

***Derma, Erica Curci, 2018***

***My New Second Skin, Erica Curci, 2021***

***Exuvia, Erica Curci, 2022***

installation with garments made with *Acetobacter xylinum* culture and bacterial cellulose

Erica's artistic practice is centred around the most external casing of the body: the skin. Conceptually, her work stems from an analysis and consequent reinterpretation of *ecdysis*, the biological processes of loss and re-formation of the outer layer tissue in certain organisms. In snakes, the products of this process are known as *exuviae*, because snakes "sese exuunt"—literally, "they undress". By experimenting with biological materials through bacterial cultures and bioactive substances of plant origin, Erica is able to produce tissues that closely resemble the epidermis (the outermost layer of the skin).

***The Never-Ending Egg, Johana Pošová, 2022***

digital print on billboard paper

The starting point of the photographic series is the so-called long egg: a log of boiled egg, without shell, slender and cylindrical in shape. Conceived for the mass market in the mid 70s, the shape of a long egg allows an equal distribution of the yolk, and, in turn, slicing of uniform boiled-egg medallions.

Johana's witty photographs take the set of symbols traditionally associated with eggs (fertility, cyclicity, birth) and turn them on their head. What happens when an egg is artificially elongated and brought to resemble a phallic shape?

***Meat is Not Murder, Pedro Neves Marques and HAUT, 2021***

16mm film transferred to video, 5', 5.1. surround sound. Courtesy of the artists and Galleria Umberto di Marino. Commissioned by the Liverpool Biennial with the support of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

A short film narrating the dilemma faced by an animal rights advocate and hard-core vegan when confronted with the possibility of eating cellular-grown lab-made meat. Both funny and gruesome, the film is imbued with an intimate and sensorial relation to images and music, creating an emotional narrative about the making of bodies, whether human or not, in science and preconceptions surrounding what is deemed natural and unnatural. The film is a part of the series *Medieval Bodies*, which echoes contemporary issues surrounding queer reproduction and gestation, fears of artificiality in biotech, and the fluidity between human and nonhuman bodies.

***Skin Come Leather, Lukáš Hofmann, 2019***

video

+ performance on 30 June 2022

Skin is the porous and partly permeable border between me and you; it is exposed to the world, while at the same time also creating a safe inner space for the body which inhabits it. Part of a larger project commissioned by the Jindřich Chaloupecký's Society, the video explores skin as a primary platform through which bodies interact and encounter one another and exposes the process by which skin is transformed into leather.

Quite untypically for the artist's practice, the performance held on the occasion of the exhibition opening in the basement of the gallery is not to be considered a theatrical piece for a big group of actors. On the contrary, it creates an intimate situation, inviting the viewer to engage in an open-ended corporeal conversation with the performer.