

BODIES AND ANTIBODIES

17 November 2023 – 28 January 2024

BODIES AND ANTIBODIES offers plural understandings of the mutability – the slack, frictions and glitches – in the relationship between the idea of a body and its construction. The four artists presented in this exhibition – Malin Hallgren, Cassie Augusta Jørgensen, Maja Malou Lyse, and Erika Stöckel – open up a discourse, teasing out multiple dialogues around the instability of the body as a fixed notion. Their works give a voice to questions around identity, gender, the right to pleasure, body politics, abstraction, material, sensuality, performativity and process.

The constellation of artistic works creates an interplay of positions: the body as subject and object, vessel and commodity, resisting or succumbing to the values ascribed. One starting point is the questioning of attitudes to identity construction and historical approaches to the concept of femininity. Does the body have the agency to exhibit itself or is it unwillingly exposed? The voice – and the possibility of having a voice – resonates in the exhibition as a political desire to dismantle the status quo.

Two video-based works by Cassie Augusta Jørgensen and Maja Malou Lyse define the time frame, and sculptural works by Malin Hallgren – working with textile and metal – and Erika Stöckel – working with ceramics – become objects in a continuous exchange. The specificity of each artwork in the exhibition creates its own arena for thought and feelings, processes and positions, politics and poetics, where contrasts and paradoxes are understood as aspects within an expanded field of knowledge.

The first piece that visitors encounter in the exhibition is a video work by Maja Malou Lyse, a 10-minute long piece embracing the tone and ironic drawl from *Sex and the City*, drawing attention to the sometimes contradictory layers within its portrayal of multiple feminisms. Who has agency to self-determination, the right to desire and pleasure, through sexualization, commercialization, invisibility, hypervisibility, voyeuristic behaviors? Maja Malou Lyse's work is an intelligent provocation into the role of bodies in a world based on the circulation and currency of their image.

A large raised podium – its high curved form and terracotta tone rejecting the status of plinth – raises up Stöckel's ceramic works to meet the visitor on a human scale, while directing our movement through the exhibition. Ceramic sculptures that resemble the body – folds, creases and openings. The clay pieces constitute an ongoing research where each new sculpture becomes an individual that together forms a family. Objects become subjects and new members cause the family to grow. Stöckel's practice constantly returns to the question of the external gaze – how do we see ourselves through the eyes of others? It's an examination of power structures, exotification and colonialism and how this settles in the body and is carried on through generations. *We map the gift we lost* – Stöckel's work for *BODIES AND ANTIBODIES* – plays with the roles of *us* and *them* and how those categories constantly shift between the sculpture and the viewer.

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Malin Hallgren's sculptures in metal and fabric occupy the wall opposite Stöckel's ceramics – setting up a dialogue between materiality and structure. This positioning could also be read as complementary investigations into how a body is built, and clothed – through artistic means, with organic and fabricated materials that condition, shape and adopt the form of a body, while in a state of transformation over time.

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen's film work *The Danish Girl Dick* traces a plurality of histories of bodies in transition. With a rhythmic and physical performativity rooted in choreography and dance, this film work sets up an imaginary space that hosts seemingly biographical narratives. Simultaneously emotional, spiritual and surreal, Jørgensen intertwines the personal and historical, combining private and that which transgresses one individual experience.

Personal experiences, languages still under construction, tests, confrontation and gestures of care co-exist in *BODIES AND ANTIBODIES*, occupying equal time and space without given hierarchies. This exhibition considers bodies as vessels and material that constructs; antibodies as systems to dismantle preconceptions, breaking down strict or closed definitions.

The works presented operate as nodes within a complex reality full of nuances and myriad histories: acknowledging that alternate narratives can be applied, other discourses are possible and that a will or demand for an objective "truth" nowadays is rendered an impossibility. Performativity and choreography define a context where bodies move and interact, where encounters can happen, and conversations can flourish.

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The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation
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Participating artists

Malin Hallgren (b. 1991, Stockholm, Sweden) graduated from Konstfack in 2022, after studying fashion in Berlin and Sweden. Drawing on this background, Hallgren's work meshes different materialities and languages, realizing sculptural forms that still nod to the world of fashion Hallgren's sculptural works. Hallgren lives and works in Stockholm

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen (b. 1991, Copenhagen, Denmark) works at the intersections of visual art, dance, and theater. Alongside classical ballet and modern dance training, she studied visual arts at the Royal Danish Art Academy in Copenhagen and dance and choreography at the Alvin Ailey School in New York. She lives and works in Berlin and Copenhagen.

Maja Malou Lyse (b. 1993, Aarhus, Denmark) graduated with a Masters of Fine Arts from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2022. Maja Malou Lyse is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores the complexities of identity, body image, pleasure politics and social dynamics through an immersive practice. Regularly using alternative platforms embedded in our daily lives—such as magazines, television shows and digital media—Lyse's practice highlights the ways that desires are deeply connected to the cultural and political realities of our time.

Erika Stöckel (b. 1989, Kiruna, based in Oslo, Norway) gained an MFA from Oslo National Academy of the Arts (2017) after pursuing a BFA Academy of Fine Arts Umeå. Clay is the foundation of Erika Stöckel's work. Stöckel's ceramic sculptures resemble the body – folds, creases and openings. They form an ongoing research that extends to an examination of power structures, exotification and colonialism and how this settles in the body and is carried on through generations.

Works

The Danish Girl Dick

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen, 2022

Video, color, sound

23 min 34 sec

Antibodies

Maja Malou Lyse, 2022

Video, color, sound

10 min 29 sec

I hope this body finds you well,

Malin Hallgren, 2022

Metal, fabric

We map the gift we lost,

Erika Stöckel, 2023

Ceramic

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