EXHIBITION SKIN

Anne Noble, Eva Dermenaky, Goran Bertok, Gorkem Ergun, Karina Sirkka Kurz, Špela Šivic, Kristina Ferk, Nataša Ilec Kralj

The exhibition Skin unveils different photographic practices, touching the topic of skin, be it gently or roughly, from its superficial manifestness, to microscopic structures, to its social embodiment – in the economy of the gaze. It oscillates between the desired and demanded, exposing physicality, the relations between the real and the created, between immersion and deconstruction.

Production: Čarovnije dom, Cultural and Congress Centre Ljubljana and Fotohaus Innsbruck
Exhibiting artists: Anne Noble, Eva Dermenaky, Goran Bertok, Gorkem Ergun, Karina Sirkka Kurz, Špela Šivic
Concept: Monkeyzoo Institute (Jan Babnik, Kristina Ferk and Nataša Ilec Kralj)
curators and layout: Kristina Ferk and Nataša Ilec Kralj
Čarovnije dom Exhibitions Programme Curator: Katerina Bergoch
19 January – 1 March 2021, Čarovnije dom Foyer 1
Opening on January 19th 2021, at 19:00!

CATALOGUE

SLOVENIAN

Skin – organ, boundary, shield, medium, metaphor. This permeable surface stands as a barrier to the "outer" world, an observable texture of our public persona, and is the same time a sanctuary for our perceptual inner self that mediates and constructs our environment. Carved by the space and time, the skin is a (living) tissue, shaped by the (social) time (inscribing on it the contours of individual's autobiography. It is carnal, intimate, personal, always present. It belongs to the senses and at the same time it is alienated, lifelessness, even uncanny – it belongs to us, others, – everyone – but at the same time, to no one at all. Skin is a part of a wider social tissue, framed by the gaze of others, seemingly as unnoticed by its own spirit. It is a membrane of the world and every individual – it equally reflects and interfaces identity.

The exhibition *Skin* unveils different photographic practices, touching the topic of skin, be it gently or roughly, from its superficial manifestness, to microscopic structures, to its social embodiment – in the economy of the gaze. It oscillates between the desired and demanded, exposing physicality, the relations between the real and the created, between immersion and deconstruction. As Susan Sontag pointed out, photography is a powerful tool for the construction of social fantasies, and here a positive impact even as that mostly it yields cynicism and manipulation. Photography is a powerful tool for the construction of social fantasies, and here a positive impact even as that mostly it yields cynicism and manipulation. The experimenting, having fun, and making mistakes, we can create a new aesthetic that opens up the possibility of replacing the images of women that have functioned so far. An aesthetic that in time will overwrite the female images that existed in a particular culture.

PROJECTS AUTHORS CURATORIAL TEXT

EWA DOROSZENKO: RADICAL BEAUTY, 2021

The underlying question: How do man and his nature change? In response, my purpose is to reconfigure the human body, its limbs and organs as a fixed point using here-based media. In the process I investigate the limits of various materials, transforming and coalescing them, to create a new, hybrid, and unsettling aesthetic. Through the use of CGI, I have the freedom in this project was an experiment where the process itself was the determinant. I based my work on the assumption that the physical characteristics of human beings that evolve under these human could be the starting point of the response to my initial question, continuing with the hybridism resulting from their transformation, or in my opinion, their reparation, with the redesign and synthesis of materials and body parts. As always, the termination of the process was made possible by use of photography and video: they facilitate the building of a mutual language, while concurrently they can be misleading regarding time, space and scale, producing only a vague and possibly deceptive meaning, bringing to the forefront a feeling of unnerving 'in-between'.

Ewa Doroszenko, from the series Radical Beauty, 2021.

GÖNKEM ERGÜN: PHASE REPAIR, 2021

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KARINA SIRKKU KURZ: SUPERNATURE, 2015–2019

Supernature is a body performance piece that explores the concept of the body as a malleable, sculptural entity. In this manner, aesthetic plastic surgery serves as an important conduit—a highly invasive practice, which revolves around designing and restructuring one's physical appearance according to specific visual ideals. How does reshaping the appearance of the body affect one's self-image? Additionally, how are these corporeal interventions – that indelibly alter internal tissue, membrane, and flesh – experienced? In her approach the artist shifts concepts from the book *Our Strange Body* (2014) by Dutch philosopher Jenny Slatman, who explores notions of medicine and fascination Slatman argues that "[…] what we call our own body consists of a strange dimension. Precisely because of this element of strangeness in our own body, we are capable of incorporating strange ones and adjusting to radical physical changes."

Karina Sirkka Kurz, Alien Element, from the series Supernature, 2015–2019.

ANNE NOBLE: TOUCH MEMORY, 1999

This suite of images invites recall of memories triggered by touch – but also by scent and by sentiment. The title riffs off the name of a digital identification device called a touch memory – a process by which a memory is created and accessed when an electronic touch probe comes into contact with a memory button. Likewise human contact through touch can be both physically and metaphorically electric especially when combined with scent. Touch Memory points to the thrill and significance of touch.

Anne Noble, from the series Touch Memory, 1999.

GORAN BERTOK: HUNGER (LAKOTA), 2017–2019

The Hunger series examines the body emaciated through an eating disorder, anorexia. The photographs were taken in 2017, during the Slovenian Lockdown, when the artist suffered starvation somewhere in the Third World, we all the more disturbing because they unfold before our very eyes, in a society of plenty, largely featuring young people. Can this seemingly voluntary refusal of food leading to extreme debility and even death serve as an indicator of covert violence, including the violence that society inflicts on an individual?

ŠPELA ŠIVIC: BRUGNON, 2021

Most of the photographs comprising the young artist Špela Šivic's *Brugnon* series were taken during last year's lockdown, when she was forced to retreat one way or another into the intimate world of her loved ones. Thus emerged a book of sensual and intimate photographs of young women who are close to the photographer and posed for her during the quarantine. Featuring an intimate world so inhabited by the portrayed women and the photographer, the series explores the theme of female sexuality, the relationship between the gaze, images of seduction, invariably serving as an evocation of sensuality and eroticism, are constantly surfacing in various contexts throughout the photographs. Špela Šivic's project, marked by minimalist design and dreamy aesthetics, examines the importance of personal space. Furthermore, in juxtaposing fruits and naked bodies, the series explores the importance of eroticism in visual art and questions traditional representations of female nudes. The *Brugnon* series was featured in an eponymous book self-published by the artist in 2021.

Špela Šivic, from the series Brugnon, 2021.

IMPRESSUM

SKIN – INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION • **production**: Čarovnije dom, Kulturni in kongresni center Ljubljana and Fotohaus Innsbruck • **exhibiting artists**: Goran Bertok, Gorkem Ergun, Špela Šivic, Karina Sirkka Kurz, Anne Noble, and Špela Šivic • **exhibition concept**: Monkeyzoo Institute (Jan Babnik, Kristina Ferk and Nataša Ilec Kralj) • **curators and layout**: Kristina Ferk and Nataša Ilec Kralj • 19 January – 1 March 2021, Čarovnije dom, Foyer 1 • **Čarovnije dom Exhibitions Programme Curator**: Katerina Bergoch • **organisation**: Damjan Gorenjc • **graphic design**: Primož Pislak, LUKS studio • **texts**: Kristina Ferk and Nataša Ilec Kralj • **translation**: Anina Oblak • **public relations**: Zvezdana Lazar Bornar • **technical realisation**: Čarovnije dom, Ljubljana, Klapčič d. o. o., Ljubljana • **publication**: Skin – exhibition texts, programme and catalogue, financed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia. The exhibition was co-financed by the City of Ljubljana (Mestna občina Ljubljana).

Featured image: Karina Sirkka Kurz, Alien Element, from the series Supernature, 2015–2019.

"Death, preservation and the uncanny are key elements in understanding and addressing both the appeal and/or disgust which many feel towards taxidermy."

— Montse Morcate

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