

Fruit bursts on your lips

HUNT KASTNER

**Valentýna Janů, Marie Lukáčová,
Marie Tučková, Lou Lou Sainsbury**

curated by Hana Janečková

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Bringing together new and recent work by a group of international artists, Fruit bursts on your lips asks how we can experience domesticity while resisting its oppressive undertones, particularly in relation to femininity. It shows the home as a performative and psychic space, where kinship and the self are established and changed through affective forces: love, cruelty and indifference.

In our house, we want the forest before the book, the abundance of leaves before the pages. We want fruit to burst on our lips - the pulses before destiny. I want the naked, prenatal and anonymous night. We want the arrival to see arriving.

As soon as we draw, we advance into the unknown, hearts beating avidly, we are going to lose ourselves. Technique: time travel. In the bedroom, lines cross the holes of the body, songs cease.

In the kitchen, there are acts of births, potency and impotency swirl through canvases of the dinner table. Eyes are wide to follow the movement of the pencil. Bones, leaves and lettuce, artichokes and arugula, it precipitates itself in spasms and waves, the length of the arm passing the hand and pencil. The centre's the entry to the forest of leaves. You recognise the true drawing, the live one: swirling, still running, it escapes from the plate. As long as we are seeking, we are not yet full; as long as we are seeking we are innocent. Circles and strokes to meet each other, apart and together. The drawing is without a stop.

Lines drawn by cherry stones. Cherry wood, tainted and polish soothing the body, encrusted with sooo real jewels grazing on the speckles of dust. On the floor they advance, tracing the steps, collecting the bodily parts as they roll. They crack and roll, always splitting. How to draw speed, how to draw hesitation? Drawing spots - polka dots advance such a rhythm - drama without a stage, an instant relief from the footprints.

Does desire die quicker when lines settle or when the body is close to fullness and saturation?

The drawing carries sounds and noises - the shuffling of chairs when the artist's voice meets other. When they meet, long streams of thread to gain a body, it blossoms. Suspended, it bears revelation and sadness, yarn, story and song of polyphonic rebirths. Between us and the strings and scores, threads lay bare, untangled: how to give a form to emotion? What is being felt and thought through the body to the stringy bits licking a wall? The voice, as if suspended from the ceiling, rests, yet it fills the space with sunlight. The moments we seek to draw are when the yarns blossom, untangling the time. You'll recognise the true drawing as the live one: it's still running.

An afterthought: the figure which announces itself is an angel-witch. It's from inside of the day that the drawing rises to the light. With Lou, we've just drawn an angel, screeching and singing, as her heart rises to the sun. Where do we appear now?

Technique: Time travel. Taste the world, I taste ten worlds, they burst like fruit, they burst on your lips.

(After Hélène Cixous, Stigmata)

Text by Hana Janečková

Valentýna Janů (*1994, Prague) studied in the studio of Post-Conceptual Photography at FAMU in Prague and the Intermedia Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Her primary medium is the video essay, often presented in mixed media installations, which create environments that are often completed by fabrics and other materials and objects. Her projects playfully address big life questions determined by the patriarchal system, the world of technology, and climate change among other social issues.

For the exhibition, *Fruit Burst on Your Lips*, Valentýna is showing both new and recent work presented in a multi-layered installation, a scenic arrangement that also directly references the title of the exhibition. By twisting the forms of familiar objects and allowing them to escape their practical, decorative purpose, she gives them new and unexpected meaning as she explores their gendered narratives.

In 2018, Janů won the Other Visions Award at the PAF Olomouc and was a recipient of the 2021 Jindřich Chaloupecký Award. Since 2021, she is co-head of the Intermedia Studio at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Brno University of Technology along with Jonáš Strouhal. Her work has also been the focus of solo exhibitions at The Platform in Antwerp (2023); Kunstverein Dresden (2022); NOD Gallery, Prague (with Marie Lukáčová, 2022); Lítost Gallery, Prague (2020); National Gallery in Prague (2018); Prague City Gallery (2018); Fait Gallery, Brno (2018). In 2022, she created the performative work, *Holding Keys*, inspired by public space as a platform for individual expression and social acceptance, that was staged at night on the Žižkov Stairs at the Lipanská tram stop as part of hunt kastner's NBW summer program. She is currently preparing a solo exhibition that will open early next year at the Kunsthalle Bratislava.

Marie Lukáčová (*1991, Opava) studied at the Brno Faculty of Fine Arts, the Prague Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design (UMPRUM), and the Kunstakademie in Mainz. She played a key role as a co-founder of the feminist group Čtvrtá vlna (The Fourth Wave), which initiated a public conversation about sexism and gender inequality in universities. In her work, she engages with topics such as the position of women in society, sociology, geology, mythology, and science, often expressed in the medium of moving image, 3D computer graphics, and installations, where she frequently works with her own texts and beats. Her work explores how the mechanisms of power produce hierarchies or predetermined roles in everyday life.

For the exhibition at hunt kastner, the artist has created four new works on paper, elaborately conceived pencil drawings in a circular format that hypnotically draw the viewer deep into pools of unconscious psychic contents and a cultural conserve of mysterious worlds of charm and magic ruled by rituals and hierarchies.

Lukáčová is a 2019 laureate of the Jindřich Chaloupecký Award and her film work has received numerous awards including the Prize for Best Experimental Movie at Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival (2019) and the award at PAF: Festival of Film Animation and Contemporary Art in Olomouc (2018). In 2022, in a lecture hall at the University of Economics in Prague, Lukáčová presented *Assets and Cherries* for hunt kastner's NBW program, a performative rap lecture that explored the deepening of social inequalities in the current economic landscape. She will open a solo exhibition on November 13th at the Prague City Gallery in the Prague House of Photography. She currently teaches at FAMU - the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

Lou Lou Sainsbury (*1994, London) is an artist based between Rotterdam, NL and Margate, UK, with a MA in Art Praxis from the Dutch Art Institute and a BA in Moving Images from the University of Brighton. Working across film, live-performance, poetry, drawing, sculpture and textiles, she is a self-described time traveller, making things that unwrite histories of living beings into tricksterish dreamscapes, exploring identity, community and ecological entanglement. She often works in collaboration with others, developing intimate long-term research-led projects guided by improvisation, cinematic processes and sonic thinking.

'Membering the Night Witches' is single channel 15 minute video that was commissioned for the exhibition 'I fantasize springtime and cry' by La Casa Encendida in Madrid in 2020. The film presents an "erotic post-human-gothic-fantasy of the all-female Soviet WW2 bomber pilots known as the 'Night Witches'. The watery film portrays an auto-baptism & fertilisation within the undercurrents of transness, Christian mysticism and radicalising love songs/hymns for impossible queer longing."

Lou Lou Sainsbury's work has the focus of solo exhibitions at Roodkapje, Rotterdam (2023); Humber Street Gallery, Hull; Gasworks, London (2022) and Well Projects, Margate (2020) and included in group exhibitions such as Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin; International Film Festival Rotterdam (2023); Whitstable Biennale (2022); Centre for Contemporary Arts, Prague (2021); La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2020), Tate Modern, London; Nottingham Contemporary; Yaby, Madrid (2019) and Flat Time House, London (2018). In 2024, she will be an artist in residence at the EKWC: European Ceramic Workcenter in Oisterwijk, NL.

Marie Tučková (*1994, Prague) studied in the Photography Studio at UMPRUM (Prague Academy of Art, Architecture and Design), continuing her studies at the DIA Art Praxis in Arnhem. In her practice, she often combines music, performance and visual elements as she explores the idea of polyphony, common voice and the politics of listening. Tučková, inspired by the Guyanese author Wilson Harris (1921–2018) and his essay Music of Living Landscapes, perceives a performance or concert as a form of endless rehearsal, an ongoing process or improvisation rather than a final work.

The recent works by Tučková – sinuously soft pastel drawings, crocheted textile and glass objects - presented in "Fruit Bursts on Your Lips" carry the titles: Cosmic Body Filled with Shattered Earth; Wet Scores; and, Can you hear them cracking the ground? Emanating from deep within the works we sense an exhalation pouring out as a liquid from an open wound, a release of interweaving of stories from fluid bodies.

Tučková, a 2020 laureate of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award and the 2017 Exit Award has participated in recent exhibitions such as: Move Festival, Centre Pompidou, Paris and Liberec Regional Gallery (2022); < rotor >, Graz (2022); Biennale of Matter, Prague (2022); galerie Display, Prague; Kurzor gallery at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Prague (2021); House of the Arts in Ústí nad Labem (2019); and the Academiae Youth Art Biennial in Bolzano (2018). In 2022, hunt kastner commissioned the performance "Ensemble of Moans", which premiered in the unique space of Žižkov's Bethlehem Chapel as part of the NBW summer program of art in public spaces. She is currently working on a new musical album and performance from the "Wet Scores for Listening" series as a 2023 artist-in-residence at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

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