

In August Moon Surrender

Veronica Brovall, Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir and Lyndal Walker

Curated by Linda Toivio

Opening 15th August 2019

In August Moon Surrender is a group exhibition gathering for the first time three Berlin-based artists, who besides their chosen vocation also share a friendship. Veronica Brovall, Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir and Lyndal Walker take cues from mystical traditions, folklore and sensory experiences, each exploring female reality through a different medium. The female experience has a pivotal role in the exhibition, emphasized by a focus on the moon, the astronomical body representing feminine energy, intuition and emotions. The lunar cycle also rules the female body and in relation to other planetary aspects, every full moon holds a different meaning, impacting us in multiple ways. On the 15th of August, also chosen as the date of the exhibition opening, the full moon will be in the sign of Aquarius. According to ancient knowledge, it is an ideal time for releasing old relationships, goals or beliefs which we no longer align with and clear space for a new cycle.

With a widely different approach to their practice, the artists appropriate the unconventional gallery space; Brovall's corporal ceramic sculptures and Walker's veiling curtains expose the rawness of the industrial interior within the historical boat. Meanwhile, Hauksdóttir is engaging our other senses, inciting us to acknowledge and release the past. The works come together creating a narrative about future models for gender and our bond with both spirituality and carnality. Although the element of friendship is important, the exhibition is also a celebration of non-conformism, honouring what has been shunned by patriarchy and rationalism.

***Grinding* - Veronica Brovall**

In comparison to the gentle and nurturing characteristics commonly associated with the moon, Veronica Brovall's work transmits a more raw and unapologetic feminine energy. Composed of a heavy, powder-coated steel construction and large ceramic parts, the sheer physical weight of her sculpture feels grounding. It is certainly not meant to be weak, concealing a fair amount of anger under the surface and reflecting the themes of sexuality and violence, which the artist has been exploring the past years. Produced in Berlin in 2018, the work has previously been shown at the Uppsala Art Museum in Sweden earlier this year.

Imposing an explicit contrast to Hauksdóttir's ephemeral soundwork and Walker's delicate satin curtains, the shape of Brovall's sculpture is ambivalent, evoking an array of reactions. It is impossible to escape its sexuality, although there is no certitude whether we are observing breasts or erected phalluses. Considering the work from a female perspective, the rust and pink hued ceramic mouldings can be perceived as armours of breasts, waiting for a militia of belligerent women. Plainly sensual, slightly unnerving, the alterations between the rough and smooth textures of the object arouse a desire to touch, a longing for a tactile experience. Concurrently, the sharp steel construction resembles gigantic teeth or fangs, confronting us with an evolutionary terror of being bitten or eaten, a primal fear present in most living creatures. Hence the name *Grinding*. This juxtaposition creates a confusing push and pull response, simultaneously alluring and repelling.

***She Will Die by Reality* - Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir**

In August Moon Surrender marks Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir's fourth collaboration with Hosek Contemporary. Continuing the tendency of her previous works at the gallery, her latest piece *She Will Die by Reality* is a performance interacting with a soundwork. Specifically conceived for the cargo space and the surroundings of the boat, it provides the audience with a multisensory experience by incorporating sight, sound and smell. The element of smell is seldom used in art, undermining its immense capacity to trigger emotions and repressed memories. Here the scent of rosemary will add a ritualistic layer to the artwork, as it is traditionally used for cleansing and believed to purify spiritually and physically.

Although Hauksdóttir's performances and their reoccurring characteristics can be seen as an ongoing body of work and natural sequels to one another, they each exist in their own right. Furthermore, *She Will Die by Reality* takes on a more personal level, as it is recollecting her past lovers. A while ago, Hauksdóttir made drawings of all the men she could remember dating; some of them for longer periods, some for fleeting moments, the important ones who meant something and the others who left no mark. The intention was never to work with the drawings or show them to anyone. Yet, in her new soundwork, Hauksdóttir is revealing the title of each drawing, granting us access -although limited- to her intimate encounters. In this instance, the aim is neither to dwell in bitterness nor evoke nostalgia, as Hauksdóttir does not mourn her bygone lovers. Without judgement, she merely reflects on the past. In the context of this particular full moon, her work can be interpreted as a ritual of releasing and letting go of what no longer serves her. She simply observes and releases.

***The Binary Curtains* – Lyndal Walker**

Lyndal Walker is presenting a pair of satin curtains printed with photographs of two human bodies. Experimenting with collage, she creates a tapestry-like effect with decorative features. For the first time in her work, Walker brings the male and female bodies together, representing the unification of masculinity and femininity. In a traditional sense this might be understood as a sacred union between a man and a woman, however, as often in her practice, Walker is playing with gender stereotypes while exploring gender fluidity; what is considered feminine and what masculine, and who gets to decide in which category certain attributes fall? How should a person behave, in order to be accepted and pass as a woman? What does a real man look like in a society obsessed with binaries?

Inspired by Tarot, Walker has recreated a modern version of the Hanged Man card by suspending a male body with bondage ropes. The Hanged Man card suggests ultimate surrender, a state of stagnation or stillness at a crossroads, prior to a significant transformation. Inviting us to surrender to change, it is supporting the energy of the Aquarius full moon, which is ushering us to release old dysfunctional patterns. The Hanged Man is also a card of encouragement, pushing us to move forward in life. Those unfamiliar with bondage often understand it as a deviously sexual activity, when it is in reality about trust and intimacy. Surrendering and letting go play major parts, but always consensually. Consent is also key when examining the portrait of the woman; although exposed, she is here to dominate, gazing back in the act of defiantly flashing at the viewers.

Behind her, the snake pattern of the wallpaper is yet another symbol for rebirth and transformation.