

I Could Eat You

Casa da Cultura da Comporta, Portugal

Clearing, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel and Madragoa are delighted to announce I Could Eat You, a collaborative exhibition taking place in the Casa da Cultura da Comporta, Portugal, including the works of artists represented by the galleries, and the special participation of 2 invited artists. This is the second iteration of contemporary art shows that activates the historical location in Comporta throughout the summer season.

I Could Eat You unravels from the phenomenon of "cute aggression", a locution coined by psychologists to define the impulse, felt by some people, to squeeze or bite particularly cute beings, although in the absence of an actual intention to harm them. It is an example of dysmorphic expression of emotions: the aggressive reaction does not appear to match the experience of tenderness that triggered it. Rather than a violent assault, "I could eat you" recalls a type of annihilation more akin to absorption by the body of the object of desire—as suggested by the metaphor of eating to which the expression recurs.

When referring to a work of art, the expression could evoke that process of osmosis between matter and the artist's body in order to shape an abstract concept—which always implies contrast—but could also suggest that complex mechanism that the work arouses in the viewer relating to it. The aesthetic complacency toward captivating images is counterbalanced by layered meanings, struggles, attempts, personal experiences lying below their catchy surface. This presence, an intriguing appearance, creates a tension that makes the work complex, multifaceted, complete. Besides the tension conveyed by the idea of "cute aggression", the expression I Could Eat You fans out into a series of cross-references, ranging from sexual attraction to exaggerated agonism and personal competition; from the idea of fast consumption to the pleasures of eating. These themes will unfold in the works gathered in the exhibition, that will be served in an original architectural display evoking the typical tablecloths found in Portuguese Tascas.

*Several sculptures in the show represent a diverse fauna: the painted bronze birds by **Efrain Almeida**, the oversize blown-glass moths by **Jean-Marie Appriou**, the ceramic manta rays by **Luis Lázaro Matos**, which invite viewers to delve into the depths of the sea, or **Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel**'s pieces that oppose snails, carved in wood with a meticulous technique, to insects embroidered on the cushions with a fast-moving needle that mimics the insects' fluttering speed. Among the sculptures is also the oldest work on display: *Seagull and Fish* (1946) is a rare concrete piece by British Pop Art pioneer **Eduardo Paolozzi**.*

*White carapace roundness emerges on the surface of white sequin fabric in **Sergej Jensen**'s *Ivory Crab* (2018), contravening the artist's usual abstract practice by uncovering figurative yet mysterious traces. As black shadows instead, enigmatic forms are projected in the large inkjet prints by **João Maria Gusmão** retaining only a few recognizable features, similarly to the wooden rough-hewn sculptures by **Anderson Borba**, holding a distant reference to anthropomorphic shapes. Creatures from a fictional bestiary inhabit **Rivane Neuenschwander**'s colorful tapestries, as well as **Javier Barros**'s drawings and paintings, while man-nature or man-machine hybrids come to life in **Rodrigo Hernández**'s papier-mâché sculptures and paintings, which reference imagery from the historical avant-garde.*

*With irony and cartoonish flair, the glazed ceramic works in **Calvin Marcus**' *Fish in Dish* series bridge the themes of animals and food, another recurring theme of the show. Colorful artificial fruits compose balanced planetary systems in the assemblages of **Rodrigo Matheus**; animal forms, eggs, fruits and vegetables become new compositional units in **Erika Verzutti**'s work, establishing a dialogue with the models of tradition and at the same time disrupting their hierarchies. Eating as a collective ritual*

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is evoked in **Gabriel Chaile's** practice; it is called upon as an alternative, ironic interpretation of the stereotype of fertility in ancient female figurines in the sharp conceptualism of **Marguerite Humeau's** work; while its more visceral, scatological, and splatter twist is explored by **Yuli Yamagata** in her soft sculptures and reliefs that protrude into space. Padded paintings covered in different fabrics and pop imagery are also found in the work of **Pablo Echaurren**, a protagonist in the Italian counterculture movements in the '70s. The tension between aluminum foil and organically dyed textile is also present in the expanded paintings of **Cristiano Lenhardt**,

The relationship between sculpture, design, architecture, systems of display and consumer goods is explored by **Koenraad Dedobbeleer** and **Belen Uriel**, in reference to food and body, respectively. The body is fundamental in the practice of **Janaina Tschäpe** who, through use of oil sticks propagates her gesture on the canvas. The body—or its absence—is central to the photographic works gathered in the show: either they capture the moment (**Mauro Restiffe** and **Carolina Pimenta**), either they are the result of performative gestures (**Joanna Piotrowska**) or of an elaborate post production (**Jaime Welsh**). The tension between body and landscape is present in **Renato Leotta's** work which aims to offer a record of the natural landscape, by conveying the immersive experience in the landscape lived by the artist himself. Elements inspired by nature become characters of a new alphabet in the monotypes of **Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe**; stylized patterns in the canvases of **Loïc Raguénès**; small circles in **Audrey Gair's** work, while a lush tropical flora, with its spots of light and shadow, triumphs in **Luiz Zerbini's** paintings and monotypes.

Oscillating between figurative and abstract are the works of **Sebastian Black**, in which sinuous shapes reveal details of bodies and black circles are as many eyes looking at the visitor; of **Sarah Morris**, which follow rigorous geometries, of **Marina Pinsky**, in which the connection to the architecture that inspired them persists only in the proportions, as well as those by **Carrie Moyer**, which play with overlapping colors and textures, glazes and thick coats, giving a polymateric and three-dimensional effect to the canvas. Guided by a narrative vein are the swirling landscape painted by **Tiago Carneiro da Cunha**, ignited by mystical visions, and the paintings of **Enzo Cucchi**, a leading exponent of the Italian Transavanguardia movement of the 1980s, drawing on his longstanding repertoire of visions and symbols, from the skull to the prism and the sailing ship.

In their collaborative practice for over thirty years, **Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys** explore a dark contemporary universe, focusing on themes such as the processes of depersonalization, the relationship between man and commodity, staging a theatre of the absurd pervaded by a sinister humor. An analysis of contemporary society is also reflected in the work of **Simon Evans™** in which its remnants, such as humble materials and scraps of paper, become diagrams, diary entries, architectural imagery, showing the artist duo's concerns about the inadequacies and inequalities of the world. More introspectively, **Valeska Soares** addresses a repertoire of themes in her current research of Canonic genres of painting, often opposing concepts in the same work, exploring associations such as pleasure and pain, memory and oblivion, completeness, and absence. Another practice that looks at the present time is that of **Leda Catunda**. Through the appropriation of images from prints on clothing and textiles since the '80s, the artist captures the imaginative voracity of our time, handling images that inhabit popular taste and mapping identities and subcultures defined by consumption. Without fear of falling into kitsch or camp aesthetics or in that of cuteness—because those same popular images, with the conflicting feelings they generate, have nurtured us.

- Sara De Chiara

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Participating Artists

Efrain Almeida, Jean-Marie Appriou, Javier Barrios, Sebastian Black, Anderson Borba, Tiago Carneiro da Cunha, Leda Catunda, Gabriel Chaile, Enzo Cucchi, Koenraad Dedobbeleer, Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel, Pablo Echaurren, Simon Evans™, Audrey Gair, Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys, Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe, Rodrigo Hernández, Marguerite Humeau, Sergej Jensen, Luís Lázaro Matos, Cristiano Lenhardt, Renato Leotta, Calvin Marcus, João Maria Gusmão, Rodrigo Matheus, Sarah Morris, Carrie Moyer, Rivane Neuenschwander, Eduardo Paolozzi, Carolina Pimenta, Marina Pinsky, Joanna Piotrowska, Loïc Raguénès, Mauro Restiffe, Buhlebezwe Siwani, Valeska Soares, Janaina Tschäpe, Belén Uriel, Erika Verzutti, Jaime Welsh, Yuli Yamagata and Luiz Zerbini.

Dates

Part 1: July 5th — 30th, 2022

Part 2: August 2nd — 28th, 2022

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday

11am — 2pm | 5pm — 9pm

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