

yourself in my shoes

Naomi Boiko Stapleton, Margaux Bricler, Kora Moya Rojo, Xueqing Zhu

18th January | 18th February 2023

Opening 18th January from 6 pm

The exhibition brings together four female artists who have in common the hybridisation of the female body with other elements of the animal and plant world in different shapes and with different interactions. The works of the artists in the exhibition reflect the discovery, which is typical of contemporary society, of the complexity of the identification and self-representation of the human being. The human body today is conceived as a changing, transitory reality, defined by cultural context. Art does not offer us an answer in resolving the chaos of the contemporary, but rather leads us towards an awareness and a new conception of life. The artists in the exhibition have decided to accept the challenge with the animal and the natural world, abandoning their anthropocentrism (man at the centre of things, the measure of things) in order to cohabit and to co-evolve with animals and plants, representing a reality made of alterity. The morphing process found in these works is very material and visceral, even in the most dreamlike works, but it leads - contrary to digital morphing - to an even sharper and more predominant definition of the female character. A change that amplifies figuration and opens up to multiple meanings and interpretations and ultimately enhances and returns to the body and female sensuality which emerges almost reinforced.

The centre of **Kora Moya Rojo's** work (**Cartagena, 1993**) is the female body which is not represented realistically but is quoted through natural elements. In her works elements that are and have been symbols of fertility, femininity, birth and rebirth in ancient cultures throughout the world can be found. In the two works of the exhibition, the protagonists are two flowers, that allude to the sensitivity and fragility of the female genital organ, one of which is immersed in water, the element from which life originated and which allows it to exist. Bees are at the same time emblems of reproduction, due to their role in pollinating flowers, but are also invasive characters, who approach and court flowers and unconsciously violate them - unaware pawns of the natural logic that perpetuates the species. The artist reflects on the pressure that society has on women telling them what to do with their bodies and imposing reproduction as the ultimate goal. Her works speak of freedom and represent the body as a majestic and powerful force that cannot be destroyed and can be shaped and moulded according to individual will.

In **Naomi Boiko Stapleton's** works (**Tiberias, 2000**), a non-linear and non-literal individual history is represented. Her paintings recall memories, embodies feelings and echoes a fairy tale world where human and nature are combined to amplify experiences. Watercolours are used in her current work as their volatile nature allows for an intuitive and embodied process. Watercolours are able to hint at a perceptible form without reducing it to a fixed image or narrative.

In many of her works **Margaux Bricler (Paris, 1985)** glorifies and affirms feminine strength. She alludes to the body while never representing it directly, in a perfect balance between presence and absence. Margaux brings the female body on stage, giving it a new space and demolishing the symbols of patriarchal culture, deconstructing the traditional role of women imposed in society and remodelling that same stereotyped narrative with a new idea of the feminine.

Thus, in *Sêma, Sôma* (from Greek prison/body) we see the overcoming of the concept of the Classical Greek tradition by which only the male body can be the archetype of perfection. In the *Maison Marginale*'s series of goat feet, which is presented as a path that "guides" the exhibition, the symbol of the faun/"predatory male" is ousted in favour of the female organ that claims its own space and sexuality.

The works of **Xueqing Zhu (China, 1996)**, represent dreamlike scenarios, where the human and the natural world come together and interpenetrate. The artist creates hybrid figures mixed with natural, animal and fairy tale elements, deconstructing worlds to create others and overcoming the sharp line that defines real/unreal. She emphasises mankind and the awareness of its own animality, going beyond the way tradition has thought of this dichotomy. Mutation and interpenetration become the core, the engine of diversity and the beginning of the process of making evolution possible. In an imaginary, dreamed world the coexistence of the otherness of man and nature become visible and accessible to our eyes and the body mutated and enlarged becomes a landscape to inhabit, to host, to investigate and to reveal.

*Naomi Boiko-Stapleton is an Israeli artist based in England. She holds a BA from the University of Brighton. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions such as Juice Box, RuptureXIBIT, London; Accessible Art Work, Black White Gallery, London; Dot to dot, Coachwerks Gallery, Brighton; Shapes and things, Open Ealing Art Studio.

**Kora Moya Rojo is a Spanish artist based in London. She has exhibited in the UK and overseas, participating in group exhibitions such as: Wilderness of Being, HdM Gallery x Cassandra Bowes, London, UK; Narratives in Blossoming Vigor, SENS Gallery, Hong Kong, HK; Dark Roof, trio show, Liliya Art Gallery, London, UK. She has a solo exhibition planned in Hong Kong and two group exhibitions between London and Mexico. She graduated from the University of Fine Arts Murcia, Spain. Kora was artist-in-residence at Cobertizo, Jilotepec, Mexico last year and was artist-in-residence at Joya Air, Almería, Spain.

***Margaux Bricler held her first solo exhibition *Un œuf, un caillou, un chat* at the Galerie Michel Rein in Paris. She recently exhibited in a group show at Casa Testori and in 2021 at the *festival dei due Mondi* in Spoleto. She was artist-in-residence at Bocs Crt Cosenza curated by Giacinto Di Pietrantonio and previously in Nantes, Paris and Madrid. She holds a Master's degree in Fine Art from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris and lives between Paris and Milan.

****Xueqing Zhu studied at Peking University and the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. In 2021 and 2022 she participated in the group exhibition Antares at Extraordinario Workshop with Vulcano Agency, Marghera, Venice. In 2022 she took part in the *Palazzo Monti Degree Show III* curated by Edoardo Monti at Palazzo Monti in Brescia and in the exhibition *Nelle selve non più belve* curated by Daniele Capra and Pers sisters with Vulcano Agency and Rave East Village Artist Residency. She lives and works in Mestre, Venice.