

Anna Hulačová & Pavla Malinová

Alien Pollinators

Frieze Nr. 9 Cork Street

March 11-26, 2022

Preview, March 10th, 6-8pm

in cooperation with Berg Contemporary, Reykjavík and Friends Indeed, San Francisco

hunt kastner is very pleased to be presenting the work of two young Czech artists, **Anna Hulačová** (*1984), and **Pavla Malinová** (*1985), in an exhibition entitled “Alien Pollinators” at Frieze Nr. 9 Cork Street in London. Through sculpture and painting respectively, both artists work with figuration, their approach similarly characterized by schematizations formally inspired by classical, medieval, and folk prototypes. One can see, in their work, a shared reproduction or mirroring of figures and natural organisms that come together to form one fused, hybrid whole. In a dialogue between sculpture and painting, predominant motifs arise evolving from the interconnection of figures with natural or organic matter.

The exhibition “Alien Pollinators” brings together new works (from 2021-2) by these two artists that are engaged with environmental transformations, proposing a dystopian psycho-folkloric aesthetic. The artists entangle Eastern European mystic traditions, ecology, post-soviet sci-fi visions, the haunted past and future nostalgia. They work to escape the dichotomy of culture and nature, shifting their interests towards eco-feminism and queer ecology to afford a different perspective on the so-called fluid state of political-social transformation, migrations of notions and content of meanings. They present and perceive other-worldly beings (animals, plants, and aliens) as active agents, engaging in the subject not only through their artistic practice but in real life as well.

Both artists explore the concept of queer ecology understood not only in the context of biodiversity or questioning dichotomies, binary oppositions, and hermetic categories, but also through the prism of the ecosystem viewed as an integral process, as an aggregation of mutually overlapping relations between species, animate and inanimate beings, organisms, aliens, and the environment. They also explore the inter-relationships between so-called nature, culture, and socio-political structures.

Hulačová and Malinová take as a point of reference the figurative approach towards the post-human condition and both are interested in the process of material, semantic and spiritual alteration and adaptation, which the species must undertake to sustain themselves in the ever-mutating environment that is experiencing the evitable process of its degradation and extinction.

Anna Hulačová in her monochromatic sculptures explores the history of agriculture, labor and industrialization and its impact on the ever changing cultural landscape. Her sculptural masks refer to interspecies encounters between bees and aliens. The narrative about aliens, which came with the promise of either “save” or “destroy” the world, was a popular phenomenon in 1990s pop-culture. The aliens of the ‘90s were engaging with the material world and were responsible for mysterious field drawings and signs. These narratives can be seen as the analogue prototype of conspiracy theories, which evolved into an entire digital universe that is now inhabited by separate, disjointed communities of believers. Hulačová’s research is therefore also engaged with the failed promises of collectivity and co-existence.

Pavla Malinová’s paintings are fleshy constellations of multidimensional layers of figures, space, symbolism, and spirituality. The artist’s formal explorations betray almost existential qualities. Everything seems sensual, lively, active, potential, and erotic - with billows of movements following towards the centre of the composition, or the subject bursting below the surface into many other dimensions. The intensity of the colors combined with a manic search for shapes is often the substance of the paintings. Malinová searches for the archetypal foundations of what she calls “my private spirituality”. She combines unlikely points of

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convergence making it holistic and hybrid at the same time, balancing between the figure and the organic matter in-becoming, between utopia and dystopia.

Both artists, in different ways, embrace the idea of the inevitable culmination performing at the same time opening towards vulnerability. Their project can be perceived as new possibilities of learning and unlearning of the collective living beyond dichotomies and existing categories imposed on the material worlds. They are therefore exploring a new ethic for the entangled worlds of animate and inanimate being.

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Anna Hulačová (born 1984, Sušice, ČSSR) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague at the Studio of Intermedia Work II / Jiří Příhoda School. She is an extraordinary sculptor, whose work revives traditional crafts, translating the inspiration found in ancient mythologies, eastern cultures as well as in Czech folk traditions and original Christian symbolism into the language of contemporary art. Her primarily figurative works embody an idiosyncratic aesthetic merging ancient idols, Gothic woodcarving and surface minimalism of graphic design and photography. Hulačová has exhibited her work at many renowned exhibition institutions, including Galeria Arsenał in Białystok, Brno House of Arts, Art Encounters Biennial 2021 in Timisoara, MO.CO. Montpellier, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris, Liberec Regional Gallery, East Slovakian Regional Gallery in Košice, 2019 Aichi Triennial in Japan, Casino Luxembourg, Baltic Triennial 13, Prague City Gallery, Prague National Gallery and Gdansk City Gallery. She currently lives and works in Klučov, Czech Republic.

Pavla Malinová (born 1985 in Vsetín, ČSSR) graduated from the painting studio at the Faculty of Art at Ostrava University. She creates robust figurative paintings in which she progresses to abstract organic forms, working with symbolic narrative, archetypes and her own codes. Her work combines references to modernism as well as art brut, and it is always current with the themes and morphology of today. Malinová has introduced her work in a number of independent galleries and art institutions across the Czech Republic as well as in Berlin, Brussels and Cracow, and was a Jindřich Chalupecký Award finalist in 2019. She currently lives and works in Prague, Czech Republic.

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For further information please contact:

hunt kastner, Bořivojova 85

130 00 Prague 3, Czech Republic

galerie@huntkastner.com, www.huntkastner.com