

***Monster/Beauty: An Exploration of the Female/Femme Gaze***

**17 September - 31 October 2020**

**Private View: 17th September, 12.00-8.00 pm**

Artworks

**Sara Anstis  
Rafaela de Ascanio  
Cristina BanBan  
Lisa Brice  
Juno Calypso  
Chelsea Culprit  
Mira Dancy  
Kira Freije  
Martine Gutierrez**

**Kirsten Justesen  
Jessie Makinson  
Zanele Muholi  
Hannah Murgatroyd  
Tai Shani  
Mary Stephenson  
Sophie Thun  
Hannah Wilke**

Other Materials

**Yayoi Kusama  
Alina Szapocznikow**

**curated by  
Marcelle Joseph**

**Lychee One  
Unit 1, The Gransden, 39-45 Gransden Avenue  
London E8 3QA**

*'Monster/beauty deviates from the beauty ideal in which form, inflexibly ordered, is content; for monster/beauty shows off the more fully sensuous and intelligent content of soul-and-mind inseparable-from-body'.*

- Joanna Frueh from *'Monster/Beauty: Building the Body of Love'* (2001)

Lychee One proudly presents *Monster/Beauty: An Exploration of the Female/Femme Gaze*, a group exhibition curated by Marcelle Joseph featuring the artwork, ephemera and archival photographs of nineteen female-identifying or queer femme artists who portray the feminine body in its sexed or sexual state, empowering the womxn artist as both subject and object as well as image and image-maker. The works of these artists largely depict the female or queer femme body in a radically narcissistic way as theorised by Amelia Jones or in a 'monster/beauty' fashion as theorised by Joanna Frueh, disrupting the gendered polarisations structuring conventional modes of art production and interpretation (i.e., female/object or model vs. male/subject or artist). These feminist ideologies support aesthetic/erotic self-creation, giving agency to people who wish to be erotic subjects and objects – that is, those who wish to enjoy themselves and be enjoyed. The works in this exhibition confront the male gaze by subverting it and exposing its insufficiency, privileging feminine genius and womxn viewers, 'thereby [in the words of Amelia Jones] crippling the [male] gaze and forcing it to surrender'. To paralyse the 'male gaze', the

theoretical term coined in 1975 by the film critic Laura Mulvey to critique the use of women's bodies as objects of voyeuristic pleasure for male viewers, these artists celebrate female or queer sexuality and desire in their art, treating the gendered or queer body as a cultural product or social and discursive object or sign where meaning can be ascribed. The artists in this exhibition are what Frueh defines as 'monster/beauties', embedding 'corporeal subjectivity and agency' into their artistic portrayal of the body as inseparable from the mind and 'manifest[ing] a highly articulated sensual presence' as they wed Eros and Psyche in their creative expression as artists.

This exhibition centres around a group of photographs and art ephemera from the 1960's and 70's, each documenting a powerful woman artist critically fashioning her own image as she either posed alongside her work for publicity or documentation purposes or incorporated her own body as well as her lived experience in a gendered female body into her artwork. These artists are Hannah Wilke, Alina Szapocznikow and Yayoi Kusama.

This exhibition spotlights a 1978 nude self-portrait by Hannah Wilke from her *So Help Me Hannah: Snatch-Shots with Ray Gun* series as Wilke was the original feminist narcissist, although she only officially entered the feminist art historical canon five years after her death in 1998 courtesy of Amelia Jones' aforementioned theory of radical narcissism. During her lifetime, Wilke was repeatedly denounced for displaying her own 'too-beautiful face and body' in her art and thereby practicing 'a regressive feminine narcissism' drawn from psychoanalytical models. Feminist art critic Lucy Lippard, in a 1976 essay, condemned the art of 'glamour girl' Wilke as not properly feminist due to 'her own confusion of her roles as beautiful woman and artist, as flirt and feminist'. Jones' theory of 'radical narcissism' expands this restrictive definition of narcissism that is tied to a debased femininity to argue that Wilke's 'obsessive use of her own body in her work produces a narcissistic relation that is far from conventional or passively 'feminine', turning this conventional, regressive connection of women with a non-worldly (non-transcendent) narcissistic immanence inside out'.

Equally, in the reproductions of archival photographs of the Polish sculptor Alina Szapocznikow striking an exaggeratedly erotic or feminine pose alongside her fragmented body part sculptures and casts in her studio in Paris in the mid-1960's, Szapocznikow subverts the male gaze as a 'monster/beauty' by challenging convention and restoring agency and self-representation to women by aesthetising her own body in a stereotypically feminine fashion. As Frueh argues, beauty and self-pleasure do not have to be construed as complicity with man's desire and pleasure. Szapocznikow instead unveils the female artist, 'anatomically female and so culturally feminine', as a public figure of artistic authority and genius, appealing to a female or femme gaze from womxn consumers of art. This consumption of art outside of the male gaze thereby devalues the patriarchal arbiters of artistic value and proposes an alternative female/femme body/psyche subjectivity outside of the conventional norms of masculinity and femininity.

Alongside these performative self-portraits by Wilke and Szapocznikow is a poster published by the Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of Yayoi Kusama's 1998 solo exhibition titled *Yayoi Kusama, Love Forever: 1958-1968*, featuring Kusama's

1962 collage, *Sex Obsession Food Obsession Macaroni Infinity Nets & Kusama*. This collage incorporates a photograph by Hal Reiff of the artist reclining naked and heavily made-up on top of her phallic knob-covered sculpture *Accumulation No. 2* (1962) and sporting high heels, long black hair and polka dots covering her bare flesh. Staring unapologetically into the lens of the camera and meeting the gaze of the viewer head-on, Kusama dramatically stages her work and her self as both the artist-subject and the explicit body-object of desire and exploits her double otherness as an Asian female artist in a flamboyant masquerade of identity at odds with the normative conception of the artist at the time as a white Euro-American male. Although condemned at the time as exhibitionist and publicity-seeking, this fearless aesthetic/erotic self-creation by Kusama must be considered as part of a larger restructuring of beauty performed, enjoyed and laboured on by a community of 'monster/beauties' who cater to the female/femme gaze.

Each of these three pioneering artists unrestrainedly celebrated her own beautiful body in its sexed and sexual state and embedded her consciousness as a female artist subject, creating artworks that were successfully feminist at a time when the language of feminism was non-existent. In line with these artists, the exhibition will feature the work of sixteen other female-identifying contemporary artists who also perform their own revolutionary brand of femininity and erotic sexuality in their work that spans photography, painting and sculpture. From the intersectional photographic depictions of queer femme humans of colour by Martine Gutierrez and Zanele Muholi to the painterly female bodies from patriarchal art history reimaged by Lisa Brice and Mira Dancy, this exhibition presents the female/femme gaze in an unashamed 'soul-and-mind-inseparable-from-body' way. Echoing the fragmented erotic body part sculptures of Kusama, Szapocznikow and Wilke, Tai Shani, in three dimensions, and Chelsea Culprit, in two dimensions, pursue their subjectivity as a womxn artist through the subversive and playful fragmentation of the female body in their artworks displayed in this exhibition. Rafaela de Ascanio, using ceramic as Szapocznikow and Wilke did in the 1960's, and Kira Freije, using steel and cast aluminium, materials more associated with masculine artistic genius, employ sculpture to give agency to their lived experience in a gendered female/femme body. Like Wilke's body artworks, each of the performative photographic works of Juno Calypso, Kirsten Justesen, Mary Stephenson and Sophie Thun feature the artist's own nude or semi-clad feminine body in a pose (or act of labour) that cripples the male gaze with its radical narcissism. The surreal, expressionistic or grotesquely exaggerated feminine body is presented in the works by Sara Anstis, Cristina BanBan, Jessie Makinson and Hannah Murgatroyd, begging the female/femme viewer to examine their own interior life as well as those of the depicted female-identifying figures.

All of the works in this exhibition turn the male gaze inside out, merging the depicted feminine body with its cognitive, emotive interior and revising gaze theory by opening up avenues of visual delight for womxn consumers of art and restoring agency and self-representation to this community of 'monster/beauties' who challenge convention through their rendering of the feminine body as a site of pleasure and erotic fantasy.

## Artist Biographies

**Sara Anstis** (b. 1991, Stockholm) is an artist based in London who uses sensuous soft pastels and paint to build fantasy worlds at a remove from heteronormative patriarchy, yet strikingly transformative of it. The predominant concepts that her works explore are “subjectivity, Eros, Thanatos, humour, personal mythologies, misunderstandings and (mis)anthropomorphisms.” These themes are woven together in her images and installations alongside a plethora of otherworldly elements - strange creatures, surreal landscapes and plants - by which her feminine figures lay claim to desire, for better or for worse. She received her BFA in Studio Art and Sociology at Concordia University (Montreal, CA) in 2013 and an MFA in Fine Art from Valand Academy (Gothenburg, SE) in 2016. In 2018, she completed the Drawing Year Postgraduate Programme at the Royal Drawing School (London, UK). Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include: *Comings and Goings*, Fabian Lang, Zurich (2020); *Discrete*, Nevven Gallery, Gothenburg (2020); and *Slip spill*, 650mAh, Hove/Brighton (2019). Recent group exhibitions include: *I WANT TO FEEL ALIVE AGAIN*, Lyles & King, New York (2020); *Gestures of Comfort*, Galerie Antoine Ertaskiran, Montréal (2019); and *Palazzo Monti x The Great Women Artists Residency*, Palazzo Monti, Brescia (2019).

**Rafaela de Ascanio** (b. 1986, London) lives and works in London where she studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martin's, Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Art and Painting at the Turps Banana Painting School. Recent exhibitions include two-person shows at Aindrea Contemporary, London (with Alexander James) in 2019 and at LAMB Gallery, London (with Mattea Perrotta) in 2018. She has also performed at Tate Modern and the Peckham Festival. Her paintings and ceramics playfully reimagine art historical tropes, symbolism from Renaissance tarot cards, landscapes from mythological painting, and compositions from Egyptian friezes. Appropriating the reverence of canonical imagery, de Ascanio paints stories depicting her contemporaries, reimagining ancient narratives with female protagonists. While these characters are portraits of artists and performers, their deification as female warriors, witches and goddesses imbue them with individual talismanic powers from creation and fecundity to strength and rebirth.

**Cristina BanBan** (b. 1987, Barcelona) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Her painting and drawing practice explores the form of the human body, pushing boundaries of proportions with the depiction of voluptuous feminine figures. Reminiscent of 18th century neoclassical paintings and influenced by anime, expressionist aesthetics, pop culture and lived experience, BanBan's works empower their feminine protagonists by making them feel monumental whether contained in a large canvas or a small work on paper. Harmoniously mixing the real and the imaginary, BanBan creates intimate everyday scenes that speak to the social expectations, norms and societal values surrounding femininity and millennial life in the tech era. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona and is represented by 1969 Gallery, New York where she has had solo exhibitions in 2019 and 2020. Other recent solo and two-person exhibitions include those at 68 Projects, Berlin (2019); the Dot Project, London (2018 and 2017); Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (2018). Recent group exhibitions include *Auguries of Innocence*, Fredericks & Freiser, New York (2020); *Extra*, The Hole, New York (2019); *Forms*, Cob Gallery, London (2018); and *Griffin Art Prize*, Griffin Gallery,

London (2017). Other exhibitions include those at Richard Heller Gallery, Los Angeles, Stems Gallery, Brussels, WOAW, Hong Kong, Albertz Benda, New York (forthcoming), and Kunstraum Potsdam, Germany (forthcoming). BanBan was awarded the Arts Club Prize from Royal Academy of Arts (2017).

**Lisa Brice** (b. 1968, Cape Town) lives and works in London. Brice contests the misogynistic nature of historical figuration typically painted by white men for white men and takes ownership over how women are portrayed. Working within the parameters of art history, she echoes iconic compositions by artists such as Degas, Manet and Picasso, but instead lends her muses agency and self-possession. Her interiors draw on the artist's personal experience from living and working between South Africa, London and Trinidad over the past 20 years. In 2018, Brice had a solo exhibition at Tate Britain, London as part of their Art Now series. Brice will have a major institutional exhibition at GEM, The Netherlands in late 2020. Other solo exhibitions include those at Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2020 and 2017); Salon 94, New York (2017); and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2015). Notable group exhibitions include *Artists I Steal From*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London (2019); *La Diabliesse*, Tramps, London (2016); *Home Truths: Domestic Interior in South African Collections* (curated by Michael Godby), South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2016); and *Making & Unmaking*, Camden Arts Centre, London (2016).

**Juno Calypso** (b. 1989, London) is a London-based artist working with photography, film and installation. While studying photography at the London College of Communication, Juno began taking pictures of herself disguised as a character named *Joyce*. In 2015, Juno took *Joyce* to a romantic themed hotel in America for her *The Honeymoon* series. Posing as a travel writer, Juno gained access to multiple rooms which she used to stage her series of solitary self-portraits that explore solitude, desire and femininity through a dark comedy lens. *The Honeymoon* was awarded an international prize by the *British Journal of Photography* in 2015. For her latest project, *What to Do with a Million Years*, Juno staged photographs in a mansion built underneath Las Vegas in the 1970's as a shelter from nuclear terror, and currently owned by a mystery group attempting to achieve immortality. Recent solo exhibitions include those at Studio Giangaleazzo Visconti, Milan (2018); TJ Boulting, London (2018 and 2016); Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast (2017); 71a Gallery, London (2015); and Flowers Gallery, London (2015).

**Chelsea Culprit** (b. 1984, Paducah, KY) lives and works in Mexico City. Her work entangles representations of the body's capacity for work, play, display, expression, the performed authenticity of identity, and the intractability of freedom and personal bondage. Moving freely between the pictorial imagery of folk art and the materiality of the real world, Culprit's works are composed of feelings as much as descriptions. Working variously with painting, neon light, sculptural assemblage and installation, her work uses a composite approach to translate the ideologies of female identity. She earned her BFA in 2007 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include *Malas Madres*, Lulu, Mexico City (2019); *Fear of Seduction*, Queer Thoughts at Maureen Paley, London (2019); *DMing Purgatory*, Queer Thoughts, New York (2018); *Fishnets*, Uma Certa Falta de Coerencia, Porto, Portugal (2017); *Right to Remain Elegant*, Galeria La Esperanza at Barba Azul, Mexico City (2017); and *Miss Universe*, Yautepec, Mexico City (2016). Culprit's work

featured in group exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, Poland; Revolver Gallery, Lima; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; Museo de Arte Carillo Gil, Mexico City; and TANK Shanghai, China.

**Mira Dancy** (b. 1979, UK) lives and works in New York where she earned her MFA from Columbia University in 2009 after completing her BA at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY in 2001. Interested in figurative representation, Dancy makes paintings that portray the body in unconventional ways, exploring contemporary issues surrounding gender, sexuality, society and politics as well as the long and problematic history of the male gaze. Dancy's practice often directly references the poses and gestures of 19<sup>th</sup> century figurative painting, reclaiming the female subject as part of a confrontational oeuvre that simultaneously investigates the aesthetics of advertising and #Girlboss-style feminism. Rendered in saturated, vespertine hues, Dancy's paintings portray determined subjects seemingly incapable of concealing their interiority or, as the *New York Times*' Roberta Smith once wrote, 'female nudes who don't have time for the male gaze'. Recent solo exhibitions include those at Galeria Agustina Ferreyra, Mexico City (2020); JOAN, Los Angeles (2019); Lumber Room, Portland, Oregon (2018); Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2018, 2015 and 2014); Chapter NY, New York (2017 and 2015); Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2016); and Galerie Hussenot, Paris (2015). Her work is included the collections of LACMA, Los Angeles; The Whitney Museum, New York; and the YUZ Foundation, Shanghai. In 2015, she was included in Greater New York at MoMA PS1.

**Kira Freije** (b. 1985, London) lives and works in London after completing a BA in Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at the University of Oxford in 2011 and receiving her Postgraduate Diploma from the Royal Academy Schools, London in 2016. Freije links the material language and process of sculpture-making to written poetic structure. Meaning occurs through sculptural constellations of the universally recognisable and memory driven; the figure, the domestic, the natural world. Permeating all these subjects is the feeling of desire concealed. The complexities of intimacy, faith, power and protection inherent in ideas of the 'invisible' are searched for and sharpened through her work. Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include those at E-WERK Luckenwalde, Germany (2021); Soft Opening, London (2019); Turf Projects, London (2018); 12 Mackintosh Lane, London (2018), Recent Activity, Birmingham (2017); Occidental Temporary, Paris (2016) and the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2016). Recent group exhibitions featuring Freije's work include: *To the River*, Gianni Manhattan, Vienna (2020); *Via dell'Inferno*, Herald St at Galleria Spazia, Bologna, Italy (2020); *Far Back Must Go Who Wants to Do A Big Jump*, ChertLüdde, Berlin (2019); *The Charade*, Lockup International, London (2019); *Sheltering Sky*, GAO Gallery, London (2019); *Go*, Soft Opening, Piccadilly Underground Station, London (2018); *Flipside*, Fold Gallery, London (2018); *Ecstasy in Norwich*, Lower Green, Norwich (2018); *Dead Heat*, Kunstraum Ortloff, Leipzig, Germany (2017); *The Sleeping Procession*, Cass Sculpture Foundation, Chichester (2017); *No Place to Spit*, SET project space, London (2017); *Walled Gardens in an Insane Eden*, Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome (2017) and *A Rose Is Without a 'Why.' It Blooms Because It Blooms*, Carl Freedman Gallery, London (2016).

**Martine Gutierrez** (b. 1989, Berkeley, CA) is based in Brooklyn, New York. She received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2012. She draws from

eclectic media, acting as subject, artist and muse. Through performance, photography and film, Gutierrez documents her personal transformations by embodying various imagined personas. Gutierrez is represented by Ryan Lee, New York where her work has featured in five solo exhibitions since 2013. Other recent solo exhibitions include those at the Museum of Modern Art, Fort Worth, TX (2019); Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, MA (2019); Anna Marra Contemporanea, Rome (2017); Boston University Art Gallery, Boston (2016); and Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh, NC (2016). Recent group exhibitions featuring Gutierrez's work include: *Kiss My Genders*, Hayward Gallery, London (2019); *Transamerica/n: Gender, Identity, Appearance Today*, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX (2019); *MASK*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany (2019); *58<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia*, Venice (curated by Ralph Rugoff) (2019); *MOTHA and Chris E. Vargas: Consciousness Razing*, New Museum, New York (2018); *Shapeshifters*, Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles (2016); *LOVE*, Neiman Gallery, Columbia University, New York (2016); *About Face*, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth University, Hanover, NH (2015); and *Disturbing Innocence* (curated by Eric Fischl), Flag Art Foundation, New York (2014).

**Kirsten Justesen** (b. 1943, Denmark) is a Danish artist based in Copenhagen. She graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 1975 where she studied classical sculpture. A major figure of Body Art, Justesen is best known for her feminist performances and sculptures in which her body is often used to question the traditional and problematic artist-muse relationship. Justesen promotes the female body as her primary focus, moving away from the traditional focus on the female nude subject of the male gaze. In *Omstaendligheder [Circumstances]* (1973), a series of black and white photographs representing a naked six-month pregnant artist posing with a torso, Justesen investigates the formal qualities of the pregnant body. In 1996, Justesen curated with VALIE EXPORT the exhibition 'Body as Membrane' at Kunsthallen Brandts, Odense, Denmark. Justesen's work was featured recently in the exhibition 'Live Dangerously' at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC (2020). Her work has been exhibited in notable exhibitions including *Part 2: Maternity*, Richard Saltoun Gallery, London (2020); *Women House*, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC (2018); *WOMAN Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna (2017); and *WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2007). Justesen's work is held in numerous public collections including The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC; The National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen; and the National Gallery in Prague, amongst others. Justesen was awarded the Thorvalsen Medal in 2005 and an honorary grant for life from the Danish Arts Council in 1998.

**Yayoi Kusama** (b. 1929, Matsumoto City, Japan) studied painting in Kyoto before moving to New York in the late 1950s, and by the mid-1960s had become well known in the avant-garde world for her provocative happenings and exhibitions. Since this time, Kusama's extraordinary artistic endeavours have spanned painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, performance, film, printmaking, installation and environmental art as well as literature, fashion (most notably in her 2012 collaboration with Louis Vuitton) and product design. Over the course of her distinguished career, Yayoi Kusama has developed a practice, which, though it shares affiliations with Surrealism, Minimalism, Pop art, Eccentric Abstraction, the

Zero and Nul movements, resists any singular classification. Kusama represented Japan at the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993, and currently lives and works in Tokyo, where the Yayoi Kusama Museum opened in October 2017. Over the past decade, there have been museum exhibitions of Kusama's work touring the world in North America, Japan, Korea, Singapore, China, Australia, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Spain, England, France, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. In 2016, Kusama was selected as one of TIME Magazine's World's 100 Most Influential People. She was also named the world's most popular artist by various news outlets, based on figures reported by The Art Newspaper for global museum attendance. In 2016, Kusama received the Order of Culture, one of the highest honours bestowed by the Imperial Family. Kusama is the first woman to be honoured with the prestigious medal for drawings and sculptures.

**Jessie Makinson** (b.1985, London) lives and works in London after graduating from the London-based Turps Banana Studio Programme in 2016, the Royal Drawing School, London in 2013 and the Edinburgh College of Art in 2007. Makinson's painting, ceramic sculpture and site-specific installation take inspiration from science fiction and classical mythology. They confuse the boundaries separating human from animal as well as desire and fear. Her paintings belie concurrent understanding of reality, replacing the world as we know it with an adventurous yet unreliable narrative. Most of her subjects exhibit distortions of power play, with the artist fashioning the figures in subversive means of dress and undress. She also utilises underpainting as a key player in her storytelling in order to unify all the seemingly disparate substances represented. Makinson described her underpainting on the canvas as 'seeping and dripping through like rotten flesh or bruised fruit,' which contrasts with the still figures in the foreground. These combined elements infuse her verdant forest scenes with a wild sense of chaos, fantasy and seduction, evoking the chase between the hunter and the hunted. Recent solo exhibitions include those at Lyles & King, New York (2020); Fabian Lang, Zurich (2019 and 2018); and Galería OMR, Mexico City (2019). Recent group exhibitions include: *I See You*, Victoria Miro, London (2020); *No Patience for Monuments*, Perrotin, Seoul (2019); *Hyper Mesh*, Assembly Point, London (2019); *In the Company of* (curated by Katy Hessel), T.J. Boulting, London (2018); *BioPerversity*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles (2018); *Breaking Shells*, The Koppel Project, London (2018); and *Fake French*, Roman Road, London (2016). In 2016, Makinson won the prestigious Marmite Prize for Painting, and in 2017, she was an Artist in Residence at the City and Guilds of London Art School.

**Zanele Muholi** (b. 1972, Umlazi, South Africa) is a visual activist and photographer living in Johannesburg. Muholi's self-proclaimed mission is 'to re-write a black queer and trans visual history of South Africa for the world to know of our resistance and existence at the height of hate crimes in SA and beyond'. Muholi co-founded the Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW) in 2002, and in 2009 founded Inkanyiso, a forum for queer and visual (activist) media. Muholi studied Advanced Photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Newtown, Johannesburg, and, in 2009, completed an MFA in Documentary Media at Ryerson University, Toronto. In 2013, they became an Honorary Professor at the University of the Arts/Hochschule für Künste Bremen. Muholi exhibited in *May You Live in Interesting Times*, the 58th Venice Biennale (2019). Recent awards and accolades received include the Spectrum International Prize for Photography (2020); Lucie Award for Humanitarian



Photography (2019); a fellowship from the Royal Photographic Society, UK (2018); and France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (2017). Solo exhibitions have taken place at institutions including the Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African and African American Art at Harvard University (2020); the Seattle Art Museum (2019); Colby Museum of Art, Maine (2019); the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta (2018); New Art Exchange, Nottingham (2018); Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2018); Fotografiska, Stockholm (2018); LUMA Westbau, Zürich (2018); the Durban Art Gallery (a survey exhibition conceptualised as a homecoming, 2017); Market Photo Workshop, Johannesburg (2017); Glasgow School of Art (2017); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017); Autograph ABP, London (2017); Maitland Institute, Cape Town (2017); North Carolina Museum of Art (2016); Standard Bank Gallery, Grahamstown (2016); Gallatin Galleries, New York (2016); Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool (2015); Brooklyn Museum (2015); Akershus Kunstsenter, Norway (2015); Einsteinhaus, Ulm (2014); Schwules Museum, Berlin (2014); Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown (2014); and Casa Africa, Las Palmas (2011). The *Faces and Phases* series has been shown at the South African Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); dOCUMENTA 13 (2012), and the 29th São Paulo Biennial (2010).

**Hannah Murgatroyd** (b. 1976, Dartmoor, UK) lives and works between Bath and Devon, UK. She graduated from the Royal Drawing School, London in 2006 after completing her MA at the Royal College of Art in 2005 and her BA at the University of Brighton in 1999. Working across an open narrative of painting and drawing, Murgatroyd's practice has emerged as a timely, virtuosic expression of social community, femininity and desire, bound in a voluptuous filigree of line and colour and executed in varying tempos. Her idiosyncratic cast of characters and fantastical landscapes synthesise art historical tropes, popular culture and lived experience with depictions of the male and female body in a dramaturgy of enigmatic spectacles. What reveals itself through Murgatroyd's exceptional adroitness and imagination is a window onto a version of the world - eroticised, ambiguous and engaged deeply with surface. In the artist's own words, 'I have always pursued an idea of eroticism through bodily self-possession existing beyond any external gaze. The characters' eyes never look outward in my painting, a conscious liberation from the possessive gaze of the viewer - whether male or female - as I hand them the freedom of the painted world.' The first London show of Murgatroyd's paintings was in 2018 in the group survey *Women Can't Paint* at Turps & ASC Galleries, curated by Marcus Harvey and exhibiting alongside the likes of Rose Wylie and Mali Morris. Murgatroyd's work has featured in several other group exhibitions, including *Paintings on, and with Paper*, Cob Gallery, London (2020); *Our Souls to Keep* (curated by Lissa Rivera of the Museum of Sex), Field Projects, New York (2018); *Clay Rendering*, Century Club, London (2018); *The Story of Zebedee*, Von Goetz, London (2018); *Spike Island Open*, Bristol (2018); *Night Follows Night*, Gallery 98, Ramsgate (2018); and *Turps Cloud*, Turps Gallery, London (2018). She is featured in the *Anomie Review of Contemporary British Painting* (Casemate Publishing, 2018) for her solo show at Exeter Phoenix in 2017. Murgatroyd won the Exeter Contemporary Open in 2014 and her work was featured in the Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2008.

**Tai Shani** (b. 1976, London) is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in London. She was one of the joint winners of the Turner Prize in 2019, having been

nominated for this prize for her participation in *Glasgow International 2018*, the solo exhibition *DC: Semiramis* at The Tetley, Leeds and the group exhibition *Still I Rise: Feminisms, Gender, Resistance* at Nottingham Contemporary and De Le Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea in the UK (all in 2018). Her practice encompasses performance, film, photography and sculptural installations, frequently structured around experimental texts. Taking inspiration from disparate histories, narratives and characters mined from forgotten sources, Shani creates dark, fantastical worlds, brimming with utopian potential. These deeply affective works often combine rich and complex monologues with arresting, saturated installations, manifesting equally disturbing and divine images in the mind of the viewer. In the artist's own words, Shani is 'interested in femininity, and what can be salvaged from a history of femininity, to think about ways out of where we are now' and beyond patriarchal limits. Shani has presented her work extensively in the UK and abroad. Recent exhibitions and commissions include those at Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin (2019-20); CentroCentro, Madrid (2019-20); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2019); Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, UK (2017); Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (2016); Serpentine Galleries, London (2016); Tate Britain, London (2016); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2015); Southbank Centre, London (2014-15); Arnolfini, Bristol (2013); Matt's Gallery, London (2012); FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais and Loop Festival, Barcelona (2011); The Barbican, London (2011); and ICA, London (2011).

**Mary Stephenson** (b. 1989, London) lives and works in London where she will complete her postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy Schools in 2022 after graduating from the Glasgow School of Art in 2011. Recent exhibitions include those at Bosse & Baum, London (2020); Harlesden High Street, London (2020); Super Dakota, Brussels (2020); After Nyne Gallery, London (2019) (solo); Pestana CR 7, Lisbon (2018); Downstairs at Mother, London (2017 and 2014) (solo); and HIX Cock 'n' Bull Gallery, London (2015). Stephenson's practice encompasses painting, photography and ceramic sculpture. In her 2017 *My Man* series, Stephenson tackles real-life singledom with a playful approach that explores social attitudes around romance by creating imaginary boyfriends out of paint, clay and paper and photographing herself with them on fantasy dates in elaborately staged tableaux, complete with theatrical props and backdrops.

**Alina Szapocznikow** (b. 1926 Poland; d. 1973 Paris), in a brief but explosively inventive career, radically reconceptualized sculpture as a vehicle for exploring, liberating, and declaring bodily experience, from the ecstatic, to the harrowing, to the uncanny. Born in Poland to a Jewish family in 1926, she survived the horrors of concentration camps as a teenager. Immediately after the war, she moved first to Prague and then to Paris, studying sculpture at the École des Beaux-Arts. In 1951, suffering from a near-fatal bout of tuberculosis, she returned to Poland, where she expanded her sculptural practice. When the Polish government loosened controls over creative freedom following Stalin's death in 1952, Szapocznikow abandoned the state-endorsed Socialist Realist style, as well as the prevailing winds of modernist abstraction, to work in a more avant-garde figurative tradition. In 1963, a year after Szapocznikow represented Poland at the Venice Biennale, the artist permanently relocated to Paris where she engaged themes related to the body with full intensity and embraced Surrealist tendencies and Pop-influenced New Realism of the Paris avant-garde, championed by notable art critic and curator Pierre Restany. The artist's last decade in Paris (1963-1973) is considered to be her most important as

Szapocznikow radically deconstructed and reimagined traditional sculpture, formulating a pioneering proto-feminist vision of the human body while voraciously exploring cutting-edge, new materials such as polyester resin and polyurethane foam. While her career spanned less than two decades (the artist died of cancer in 1973 at age 46), the artist's unapologetic expression of female subjectivity during one of the most sociopolitically complex periods of the twentieth century remains hauntingly relevant today. Szapocznikow's trailblazing post-war sculptural practice has been recognized by numerous major international exhibitions in recent years, including *Documenta 12*, Kassel, Germany (2007); the first comprehensive retrospective that travelled to the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels; and the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2011-2012); as well as major surveys at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2013); the Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK (2019); Hauser & Wirth, New York (2019); and Hauser & Wirth, London (2020).

**Sophie Thun** (b. 1985) lives and works in Vienna, Austria. Thun's practice encompasses photography and collage, using her own body as a site for meaning and exploring the dialectical interrelationships between the scene of production and the work's presentation, between the setting of the artist's labour and the physical presence of the body. The places where Thun exhibits her work often serve as points of departure for photographs that show how her body imprints its presence on them. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include those at Secession, Vienna (2020); c/o Berlin (2019); Camera Austria, Graz (2019); Galerie 52, Universität der Künste Folkwang, Essen (2019); Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna (2019 and 2018); Kunstraum, Munich (2018); and Mz\* Baltazar's Lab, Vienna (2017). Selected group shows include: *Borderlinking*, High Art, Paris (2020); *DAGUERRE'S SOUP Christian Kosmas Mayer x FOTOGRAFIS*, Kunstforum Wien (2019); *Für die Vögel*, Landeskrankenhaus Hollabrunn (2019); *Body in Progress*, Austrian Cultural Forum, Berlin (2019); *Choreography of the Frame*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna (2018); and *Strudelobjekte*, New Jörg, Vienna (2017). In the context of the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019, Thun participated in the project *images of/off images*, an artistic documentation of the process of development of the Austrian Pavilion with Ipek Hamzaoglu and Laura Nitsch. Since 2015, Thun has been part of the collective <dienstag abend>. Thun was awarded the work grant from DZ Bank for 2019-20.

**Hannah Wilke** (b. 1940 New York, NY; d. 1993 Houston, TX) used the various mediums of photography, performance, sculpture and video to examine and challenge prevailing notions of femininity, feminism and sexuality. Following her graduation from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Philadelphia in 1962, she became one of the first artists to use vaginal imagery in her work with the purpose of directly engaging with feminist issues. Over the next two decades, Wilke worked on creating a type of female iconography based on the body, constructing abstract, organic forms that closely resembled female genitalia. She displayed these forms on the floor or wall in a highly organized and repetitious manner that recalled Minimalism. During the 1970s, she began to use her own body for performance pieces that she called her 'performalist self-portraits.' These performances, immortalized on video or in photographs, confront erotic stereotypes by calling attention to and making ironic the conventional gestures, poses and attributes of the female body. Wilke received several major grants, including ones from the National Endowment for the Arts (1976), John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (1982) and

Pollock-Krasner Foundation (1987 and 1992). She exhibited widely both in the United States and abroad during her lifetime, and though considered somewhat controversial for the use of her own (generally considered) attractive body in works meant to challenge traditional notions of feminine desirability, continues to figure centrally in accounts of feminist art history. Her works have appeared in numerous exhibitions at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York (1972 to the present) and Alison Jacques Gallery, London (2006 to the present), and in shows at the Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C. (1979) and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2002). Her work was also included in a major exhibition of feminist art, *WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution*, which traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Queens, New York; and Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2007–09). Recently, Wilke's work figured in an exhibition at the Jewish Museum, New York (2010–11). Wilke will receive an extensive survey show at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St. Louis, opening in March 2021. This will be Wilke's first museum exhibition since 2009. In the late 1980's, Wilke was diagnosed with cancer and struggled with the illness for the last years of her life. Shortly before she died, she photographed herself naked in the hospital, her emaciated body connected to an intravenous drip and her head bald from her treatments. These large, colour photographs were Wilke's last testament to the art world before she died in 1993.

### **About the Curator**

**Marcelle Joseph** is a London-based American independent curator. In 2011, Joseph founded Marcelle Joseph Projects, a nomadic curatorial platform that has produced 38 exhibitions in the UK and the rest of Europe, featuring the work of over 200 international artists. Joseph's expertise is in early career artists based in the UK, in particular, female-identifying and non-binary artists, and has an academic specialization in feminist art practice after completing an MA in Art History with Distinction from Birkbeck, University of London. In 2013, she executive edited *Korean Art: The Power of Now* (Thames & Hudson), a survey of the contemporary art scene in South Korea. Additionally, Joseph is a trustee of Matt's Gallery, London and served on the jury of the 2017-2019 Max Mara Art Prize for Women, in collaboration with the Whitechapel Gallery and Collezione Maramotti, and the Mother Art Prize 2018. She also collects artworks by female-identifying artists under the collecting partnership, GIRLPOWER Collection, as well as more generally as part of the Marcelle Joseph Collection. Throughout 2020, Joseph has acted as Curatorial Consultant for Lychee One, a commercial gallery located in East London.