



Camille Blatrix, Fortuna, 2019, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl

## A House is not a Home

21.09 – 10.11.2019

A new generation of artists invades the spaces of Fri Art for the first exhibition of artistic director Nicolas Brulhart. Through their works, the Swiss and international artists mix the public character of the exhibition and the private context of the home, emphasises the political dimension of space and questions the importance of the gaze in the construction of gender and identity. viewpoint in the construction of gender and identity.

[Link to exhibition views](#)

[Link to press release](#)

## Artists:

Daphne Ahlers	Marie Gyger	Dominic Michel
Olga Balema	Lewis Hammond	Sveta Mordovskaya
Camille Blatrix	Nora Kapfer	Ser Serpas
Gina Fischli	Tristan Lavoyer	
Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi	Claudia Lemke	

The home, domesticity, the primal, art and crafts, nature, the archaic are all so many examples of *otherness* that our modernity has pushed to the margins in order to found its identity. This cultural foundation is based on certain conceptions of space, of which the house seems to be the ideal metaphor, whether on an intimate, architectural or geographical level. By mixing the public character of the exhibition and the private context of the home, *A House is not a Home* emphasises the political dimension of space and questions the importance of the gaze in the construction of gender and identity.

The works presented attack the link between architecture and subjectivity. They have in common a sense-based manner of deconstructing our relationships to space, whether this space be concrete, imaginary, lived or fantasised. Oscillating between sculpture and the image, evoking the décor or furniture of everyday life, this selection of artworks express the complex and often problematic relationship of the subject to the object.

The figure of the double, the other that we have inside ourselves, inhabits the works and structures the very form of the exhibition. Opening a mental space between future and past, **the second part, entitled *A Home Is Not A House***, takes us through the looking glass to reveal a repressed present evolving out of this first exhibition.

***A Home is not A House* : 30.11.2019 – 12.01.2020**  
**Opening 29.11.2019, 6pm**



Exhibition view, *A House is not a Home*, Fri Art, 2019. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl

### **Claudia Lemke**

\*1989, lives and works in Berlin

Claudia Lemke's wood painting presents a surface on which heterogeneous representations of space come together. An assemblage of flowers stands out symbolically from the image and eclipses a coloured background that seems to be both concave and convex space. This illusory background confounds the three-dimensional representation of space by means of its own tools, depleting the perspective's realistic objectives. The bouquet of flowers, a symbolic image of femininity, asserts itself by overturning a cubist vase from which it is escaping. The black hole of its opening imposes itself as a topological breaking point, a place of inversion and the subjective anchor of the painting. If cubism multiplied perspectives to create the modern gaze, this gaze is now no more than the yoke from which the floral symbol, whose contours are engraved in the wood, frees itself.

### **Camille Blatrix**

\*1984, lives and works in Paris

The marquetry panel presented here is the product of craftsmanship, an apprenticeship undertaken by the artist, leading him to the achievement of quality in a finished product. The handmade character, the precision of the wooden cut-outs and the painted surfaces comport a certain nostalgia. They reference the grandiloquence of the industrial age, a time when Art Nouveau sought to add a subjective touch to the standardised production of modernism. This historical reference is appropriated by the artist to better highlight a contemporary situation. In its pervasive and perverse omnipresence, the affective encrustation of the design aims at a form of subjectivation. This is deployed in the storytelling of our lives, in which each individual stages their well-being, articulates the horizon of their freedom, their creativity, in a series of sentiments related to their consumption habits.

### **Sveta Mordovskaya**

\*1989, lives and works in Zürich

An indoor table floats in space. Suspended from the ceiling and inclined, it summons and exorcises the supremacist black square. The turned table-top weighs heavy over our heads. Its starry sky hosts a constellation of plastic objects. The fragmentation of the body hijacks the Romantic idea of the fragment. The signifying chain of the feminine is flattened between the ideality and the weight of the everyday. In the tilting of the head that it requires to be seen, the work structures, by means of frames, veils and symbols of dark omens, the presence of a gaze that conditions it. Neutralised fetishist elements recall the automated traps of scopic and narrative impulses. They encourage viewers to question themselves with regard to the constructed element of their projections.



Sveta Mordovskaya, *Night and Now (Rats are Angels)*, 2019, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl

### **Nora Kapfer**

\*1984, lives and works in Berlin

In order to produce her paintings, the artist has developed a method that she repeats. Bitumen is applied to create a homogeneous background onto which symbols cut from Japanese paper are affixed. These impregnate the painting with, or cause to come to the surface, an array of generic semantic content. Oily materiality, the accumulation of fossil plant energy and the paper used are the material and ecology foundations of a culture coming into end. Figurines, flowers, the moon, all produce a faint, mute narration. They are the signs of an austere and familiar appeal. From the works emerges the mysterious opacity of anthropological memory.

### **Tristan Lavoyer**

\*1986, lives and works in Lausanne

The artist's DIY constructions are the intermediate results of an exploratory immersion mixing personal psychology with societal ideology. The method destabilises the hierarchical relationship between DIY and rationality. It formulates a problematic. The professionalisation of artists goes hand in hand with the triumph of the amateur, a consequence of the mythical value of work according to the liberal outlook. The artist crafts a sort of anthropological investigation of the milieu, composed of appropriate references, statistical anonymity, that points the finger at the scholastic rationalism of those who thirst after the modern. Upstairs, the strange meeting of a goat and a Buddha on a rail throws together the natural, the cultish and the technological. The animal-totem as artist-researcher explores the territory of domestication. The laughter provoked by its movement serves as cover for the fear of vertigo: Western culture, its relation to otherness, the techne, its obsession with genetics, and the starts of a moralistic corpse.

### **Ser Serpas**

\*1995, lives and works in New York and Geneva

The content of Ser Serpas' interventions is space-specific. The artist salvages apartment furniture abandoned by its former owners in areas surrounding art spaces and installs it in these venues. She constructs intuitive assemblies from this furniture that forms a commentary on typologies of the standardised interior design accessible to the less affluent classes. In a combat with the raw realism of these disposable and exchangeable objects and guided by a poetics of space, the artist endows them with an allegorical supplement; a second life for things recalling the promises of happiness they are sold with.



Exhibition view, *A House is not a Home*, Fri Art, 2019. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl

### **Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi**

\*1995, lives and works in Zürich

The materials used by the artist, textiles, metal tubes, jewellery, rhinestones and plastic, make reference to a culture of artifice; a precarious economy that springs from a desire to create a universe from idealised fantasies of success. The sculptural assemblages deny the function of the objects that compose them to comment on their new function in a public space newly transformed into a space of consumption. Like emaciated mannequins, they make reference to the intermediate space of the window whose frame seems to have disappeared. The decorative structures the object and gives it justification in staying upright. The different pieces are personified, declined according to a distribution of the natural and the artificial. In a mimetic effect, these almost-humans seem to want to acquire senses in order to overturn the objectification of which they are victims.

### **Daphne Ahlers**

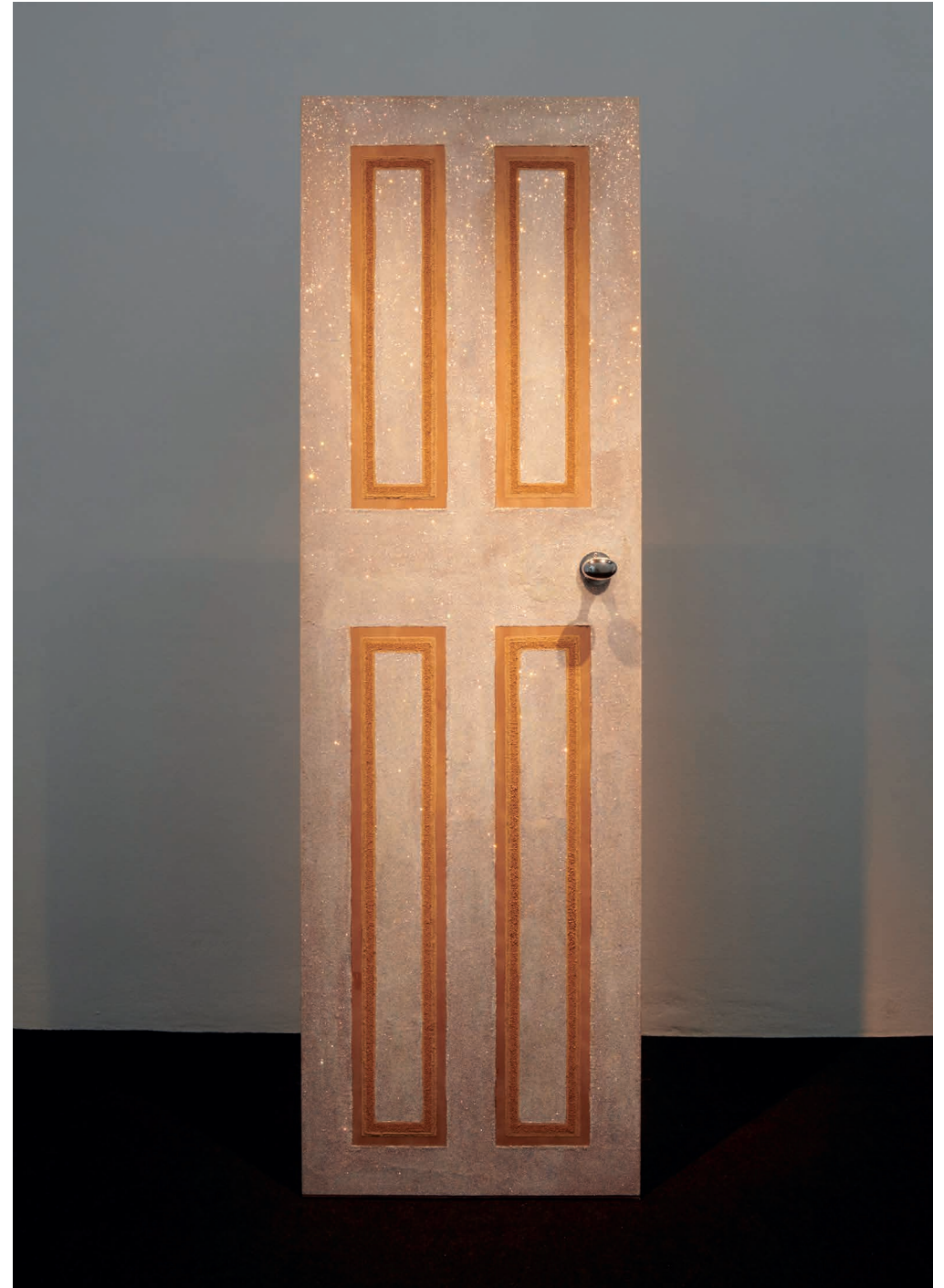
\*1986, lives and works in Berlin

In the series *Bloomers*, protective cups for the male crotch are used as moulds to produce sculptures. Here, the positive space obtained by this inversion is decorated, dressed and personified by the artist using textiles and other trinkets and jumble. The sculptures overturn conventional tropes linking gender and sexuality. The artist applies accoutrements to the coloured casts created from the cups: a masquerade that transforms them into desirable objects. The forms are dressed tenderly, as if to crown the nostalgia of the male attributes.

### **Gina Fischli**

\*1989, lives and works in London

The objects to which the artist gives shape evoke the memory of a lost daily life, a trace, attempts at which to revive are made in the image, by means of DIY and decoration. The shiny aspect of the materials used is reminiscent of childish craftwork and the hours spent constructing an object to give life to a fantasised universe. Triggers of a memory one does not know if one has experienced, they emphasise one's distance from an imaginary world one can no longer connect to, the projective dimension of the family home. Their specific animism borrows from the illusory mechanisms of dreams: the relationship to the material is sensitive, warm and tactile. The confusion of scales, the structures of symmetries, compensate the precision of an absent realism. Their symbolism ostensibly refers to unconscious constructions that structure the psychic universe, its comforts and its lures. The emotional paradox finds fulfilment in a suggestive power.



Gina Fischli, *Fire Exit*, 2018, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl

### **Olga Balema**

\*1984, lives and works in New York

Networks of elastic threads detach themselves from the floor. They are nailed in, painted and stretched. They form a slender sculptural proposition that nevertheless occupies the space prominently. The work plays with the tension between opposites. It is easily grafted onto the history of post-minimal forms to which it seems to offer an unprecedented resolution, a balance between what it avoids and what it accepts. But the closer we get to it, according to the oppositions of a structural grid, the more the sculpture retreats to leave us alone within the compass of language. It works according to the diagonal opposition of perception, caught between the body and the eye. Like a photograph or a mental image, it presents the paradox and self-evidence of the real.

### **Lewis Hammond**

\*1987, lives and works in London

Lewis Hammond's paintings are part of the tradition of oil painting. They inhabit this space in order to better challenge the stigmatisation of black bodies from the inside. Often at the heart of the painting, the subjects occupy the space in a paradoxical way, internalising in the flesh the oppressive dimension of a gaze that identifies and constrains. This gaze is only returned, from a place of interiority, in excess or equivocation. In the introspective work of painting, the artist renews the romantic tradition by politicising its schizophrenia. The theme of the double haunts the entire work. A lugubrious atmosphere saturates Hammond's paintings, even to morbid complacency. In a life-like anguish of death, the loneliness of the subject nevertheless insists on pictorial permanence.

### **Dominic Michel**

\*1987, lives and works in Zürich

The representation of glass traditionally offered painters the opportunity to test their technical mastery of light and reflections. Dominic Michel's collection of glasses with various shapes has been standardised by the artist using colouring. The glasses constitute the material basis of a meditative exercise repeated for each installation. The presentation of the collection proposes a lexicon of simple and limited forms: number, shapes, size, groupings etc. Gathered together according to the elective affinities of the moment, they are a metaphor for all construction, the tension between intuition and logic. The apparent banality of the objects masks, however, that which becomes apparent as we contemplate them. Glass is the place of encounter and separation from within and without; a surface that reflects its environment while allowing this environment to appear through it; a metaphor of interiority.

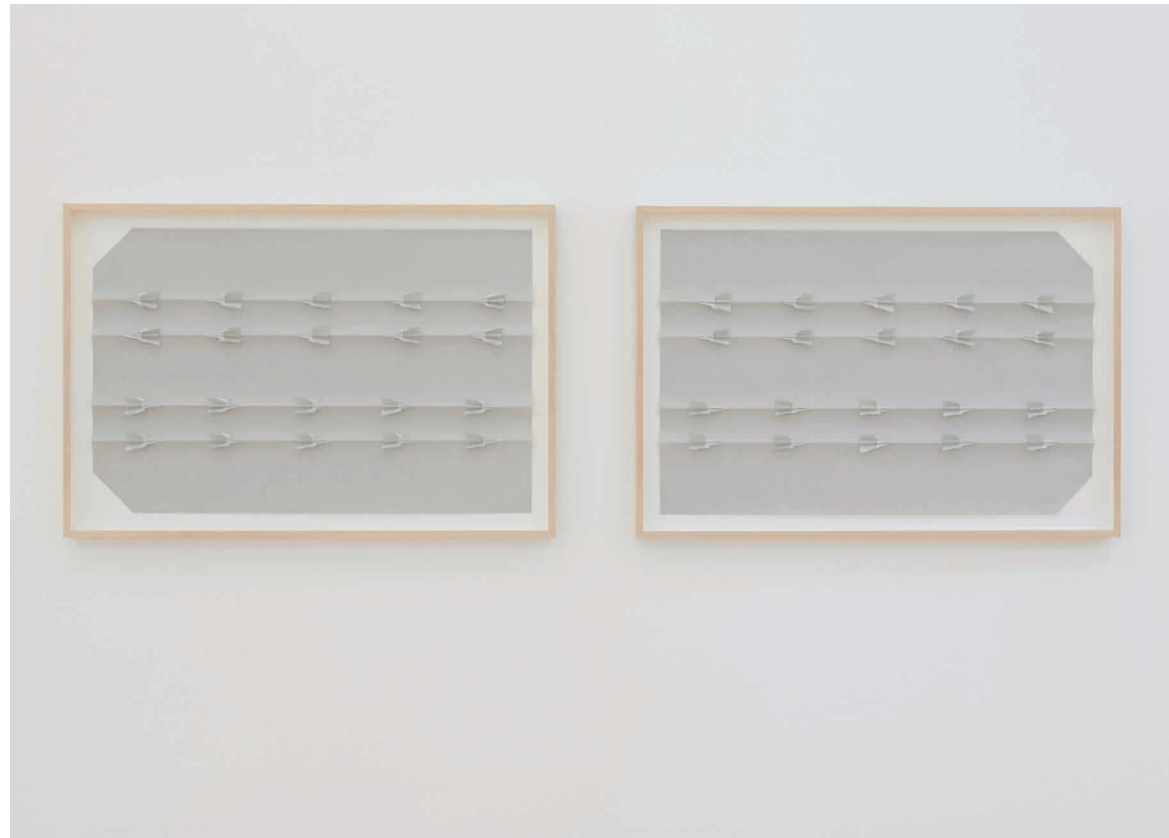


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**Marie Gyger**

\*1989, lives and works in Fribourg

The work of cutting and folding paper, a technique used recurrently by the artist, borrows from artisanal know-how and the art of origami. The choice of an economical, non-industrial form of production forces our attention beyond the field of distraction. This reduction deploys its signifying potential in a proportional manner: the hand-folding of the paper condenses another image of development, from the surface to the third dimension. Here this spatialization appropriates the childish motif of the paper plane. It is incarnated upside down with a mechanistic vision of controlled and conquered space. The repeated frieze pattern immobilises the noise and speed of aircraft, the meticulous irony of the back and forth movement implying a critique of the systematisation of air traffic. The planes thus consume themselves in an absurd circularity.

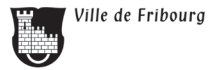


Marie Gyger, *Easy jet*, 2019, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl

## Thanks to

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## Support



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