

Julia Znoj

aquadrome bubblepad

July 17th 2021 – August 22nd 2021

open Saturdays, 2–6pm or by appointment

Anecdote

Seeing a viscous inside of a shell as a child left me adjectiveless. Its lack of form made it seem as if it was staring back at me, like a mind black hole. Little did I know that another mind black hole will await me between my legs, only a few years later. A body part so abstract, that I still don't know how it looks.

The small doll

Polly Pocket is the good citizen, much like her pristine doll colleagues. But she is small! Tiny! Her height is that of a thumbnail, a nostril, an ear can be her balcony, and she lives in a shell-like kit, which can be closed and carried away in a pocket. Polly's extremities are too tiny to be movable, so in her pastel plastic landscape she is uncannily useless and visual. She usually has one to three indentations in which she could be planted to stand still. Once there, she would become an immobile image and her thoughts would be the game.

Her shell was modelled on a makeup kit, which habitually included a mirror. But in lieu of a mirror, she reflects her interior back to the player. A miniature world overtakes the player's face, like a macroparasite. The player's otherwise ambiguous eyes become Polly's poker face of photogenic girlhood. Through extreme cuteness, she morphs the player into a vampire, without a reflection.

Inside – definition

Thoughts – anxieties – tectonic movements – unthoughts – emotions lacking vocabularies – a colony of butterflies in the belly and the language they speak that we don't understand. In the interior gravity, a rule that is always in place, is no longer paramount. Insides resemble liquid mercury, like when you break an analogue thermometer and its contents both leak and fall out, because they're simultaneously liquid and hard, and you're scared you'll get poisoned. We seek definitions, but our insides are in flux and definitions belong to the outside.

Outside, exterior, skin, tree bark, simulacra, surface, shield – definition

Outsides are imperfect forms. They are our bodies, our vehicles to take us places, to meet other bodies, and, if we behave well, dip our fingertips into their insides. Some shells look like a clay blob covered in cake sprinkles, dipped in lava and left to be covered by moss, slowly, over millennia. References, things! Who cares! Forms are in fact porous, if a wave comes over them, they might very well dissolve. Outsides pretend to carry us, to present us, to unify us, to distinguish us among each other. They pretend to be a dam to the inside, but they're not that good at what they do, and we anyway want things to overflow and to blind us to the point of borderlessness.

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In aquadrome bubblepad Julia Znoj shows two central groups of works – shells, usually closed, and, elsewhere, objects that might resemble insides of shells. aquadrome bubblepad is water's fluidity and thickness, which renders the border of one to many vagues (vague means wave in French), because the water envelops its objects, makes folds and moves them in unison.

text: Julija Zaharijević