

## Clages

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### **Interior Acts | Daphne Ahlers, Angélique Aubrit und Ludovic Beillard, Bradley Davies, Anders Dickson, Patrick Jolley and Reynold Reynolds, Aileen Murphy, Jasmin Werner**

February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023 – March 18<sup>th</sup> 2023

Perhaps living means nothing other than continuously categorizing. The functional division into kitchen, bathroom or bedroom choreographs habits and perceptions, creates hierarchies, and produces leftovers. The home embodies an ongoing digestive process that drives the construction of subjectivity. A place where the *self* can be observed outside of its own body because its substance is also revealed in the surrounding things – even those that are insignificant and ugly.

Based on the connection between inner life and inside space, *Interior Acts* not only presents the inside space as a showcase of personal states, but equally reflects on its performative forces, which in turn affect the inner life. "A house is a psychic sculpture"<sup>1</sup>, giving structure to both the movements of our bodies and the spatialization of our feelings.

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In **Ludovic Beillard's** and **Angélique Aubrit's** joint installation, miniature as well as oversized puppets interact with their surrounding in various ways. While the softness of the costumes suggests a flexible adaptation, the wooden limbs hint at a more arduous manner of movement. The composite body shells are literally placeholders that direct the attention to something *other, negated, or absent* in the space. They form a closed reality and thus open up the possibility of viewing a social structure and the roles participating in it from the outside:

"When you catch a glimpse of yourself from an outside perspective, you can see the gap that often exists between an idea and its reality, the seriousness with which you take your life and its fundamental absurdity, your story of self and imposter syndrome, authority and castration anxiety, fantasy and disillusionment."<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely the gap described by Nuar Alsaadir that **Aileen Murphy's** drawings also seem to occupy. They are portraits of shrill figures with a strange awkwardness about them. Their open mouths suggest a moment of loss of control – a spontaneous burst of laughter that dissolves the façade and places the body in a vulnerable state. In the same way, the characters demonstrate a

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\*The title is borrowed from a chapter in: Ewa Lajer-Burcharth and Beate Söntgen, *Interiors and Interiority* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 2016)

<sup>1</sup> Emanuele Coccia: *Das Zuhause – Philosophie eines scheinbar vertrauten Ortes* (Carl Hanser Verlag, Munich, 2022), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Nuar Alsaadir, *Animal Joy* (Fitzcarraldo Editions, London, 2022), 105.

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persistent attempt to turn the inside out, to shed a part that no longer belongs to them.

Home, on the other hand, represents the promise of giving the *self* a solid form with the help of the surrounding space. By mimetically scanning supposedly incidental angles of a living space, **Bradley Davies'** paintings explore the interior as a potential reflection of the inhabitant. In doing so, the view of an albino frog living in an aquarium reveals a reciprocal truth concerning the shaping through the home: It is not only a place where we retreat to adapt to the world; from here we also tame the world so as to shape it to our liking and gain a sense of control.

**Anders Dickson's** sculptures seem to follow a similar urge: the interwoven microcosms convey a model-like approach to one's own environment. Alternately shiny and dull materials combine technoid elements with corporeal fragments to create fragile-looking objects. Sprawled out as if on a bed, the assemblages allude to the nocturnal dream in which disconnected shards of the day are pieced together and cracks are temporarily repaired. The recurring mental restoration that takes place during sleep marks the bed above all as a place of constant return and renewed departure.

A cardboard box, in turn, symbolizes the temporary impossibility of return or arrival. With the aim of maintaining a physical as well as emotional connection with their family, Overseas Filipino Workers have been sending several million packages a year to their home country since 1973, known as *Balikbayan Boxes*. For the two sculptural arrangements, **Jasmin Werner** invited her mother to select items for a *Balikbayan Box*. What is intended as a gesture of affection and care by the sender is simultaneously mixed with an ambivalent sense of guilt toward the home left behind. And something else emerges from the layered architecture of the sculptures: a sense of dependence that ensures the continuation of any relationship. At the end of the exhibition, the products will be shipped. What remains is the scanned document from 1974 on all-weather poster.

It is a remarkable as well as disturbing observation that with each change of tenant, structures by people, whose stories and longings are long forgotten, are taken over and continued. The walls form a silent vessel for everything that has not been expressed in public. In **Daphne Ahlers'** seating ensemble, the absent bodies are staged by two opposing forms. The armchairs instigate a conversation, but avoid direct confrontation. Only the transformed buttons, as they are usually mounted on street lights, give hope of being able to transport the innermost desires as a signal to the outside.

Elsewhere, the act of effort required to communicate under the weight of normality is shown by the domestic scenes in **Patrick Jolley** and **Reynold Reynolds'** film. Completely submerged underwater, the protagonists attempt to engage in everyday actions, with the longed-for result constantly failing. The kiss does not create

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closeness and the brawl as a desperate reaction to one's own  
impotence does not produce a winner because the liquid mass - even  
if its presence is invisible - weighs on every movement.

Susanne Mierzwiak