

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

ALICE MOREY - EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

Opening reception: 11th September 2020, 6 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 11th - 26th September 2020

Curated by Linda Toivio

2020 is a significant year, it is a powerful year. We see destruction everywhere, disasters, disease, death. Beloved celebrities are passing away and people who never even met them post farewells and posthumous tributes on social media. 2019 was hard they said, this year will be better. Goodbye, past, welcome, future. How can such a paralysing and destructive era bring the biggest relief I've felt in a while, a sense of clarity and power. Do I call the shots again?

The title *Every Breath You Take* is a direct reference to The Police's hit from 1983, known as one of the most famous love songs in the world, despite its blatantly sinister lyrics. Abuse and stalking masked as love and devotion, in song and in real life. In contrast and in the context of this exhibition, conscious breathing is also central to healing, as it refers to the idea of releasing unprocessed traumas and patterns which no longer serve us, through the simple action of inhaling and exhaling.

I had a nightmare again last night, you were there. You are always there. I instinctively cover my face to protect myself from the storm. The random insults and subtle humiliation do not seem to hurt anymore, they have become my new "normal".

Trauma can be compared to a deep, invisible wound. We carry traces of abuse and trauma not only in our minds but also our bodies; they penetrate each cell, imprinting our bones and poisoning our brain, until consciously released. Trauma lives within us and influences our behaviour, disrupting the way our memory stores and treats information. When left untreated, it lingers and is passed down to next generations. Although the concept for *Every Breath You Take* took form in a private exchange between two women, it reaches beyond a personal recollection of abuse. It narrates a collective experience of suffering, loss and survival, present not only in ourselves, but also our surroundings. Selected parts of the works presented by **Alice Morey** were created during a collaborative art residency at Heilstätte Grabowsee, an old sanatorium built in 1896, north of Berlin. Once a hospital for treating patients with breathing difficulties, the energies of the past have been healed and the buildings are now inhabited by new life and creativity. As most abandoned places, the hospital with its echoes of collective trauma has been taken over by nature, connecting each artwork to the four elements; earth, wind, fire and water.

Morey reimagines the four elements and their transitory forms - dust, ashes and ice - in pastel tones in a gentle world, where unicorns wear condoms and chains are made of ceramics. The **water** feature, *The Well*, is a centre piece inviting the audience to write a word or sentence on the white tiles; something to think about, something needed, something never said. Two paintings of the sky act as a screen around the **wind**, protecting its metal structure and hiding

the hanging latex piece behind colourful landscapes. The element of **earth** is paramount, as it holds the space for decay, growth and rebirth. In an attempt to rid herself of painful emotions and memories, the artist buried some of her paintings in various locations and countries, including Greece, UK, Germany, Portugal and Hong Kong. The act itself could be considered violent, however, the artist sees it as a healing process, eventually leading from abandonment to regeneration. For **fire** and its destructive anger, Morey recorded voices by a crackling campfire, while the video was filmed at Grabowsee by house No. 6, previously used as a surgery room.

Morey's kinetic and skin-like latex sculptures suggest that both humans and inanimate objects bare traces of past events. Exposed to the harshness of the ancient ship, the delicate silks, the softness of the wool and the pastel colours provide a temporary safe environment, where we reveal the secrets we never told and the memories we chose to forget. The audience will be encouraged to touch, move and feel in the space. Through its participatory nature, the exhibition is aiming to offer an opportunity of release and renewal, transforming fear into action and power.

The sculptures are activated at the opening reception by ten sound artists, who also participated in the residency at Grabowsee. For the majority of the artworks, the activation process was initiated during the residency. For instance, the silks were gradually dyed with wild and natural materials, but also waste from the communal kitchen; nettles, avocado stones, onion skins, greater celandine, turmeric powder, beetroot and pine cones all left their mark on the fragile textiles.

At the opening, the activation process begins with a ceremony, performed by **Laure Boer, Yannik Dörnte, Jannis Feigl, Florian Grove, Rachel Margetts, Aisling Marnane, Juliana Napier, Sebastian Völkers, Samuel Weikopf** and **Zwek**. As the Grabowsee art residency offers a space for collaboration and community, which Morey considers as important processes for healing past wounds, she felt it necessary to incorporate this specific experience and energy into the environment of the exhibition. The activation performance is intended to be intensely triggering and healing, as it evokes the lifespan of an abusive relationship and its aftermath.

*It's been a while since the last time you hit me, since I felt your fingers tighten around my neck.
After all this time, I am writing this for myself, for you, for the next one, the survivor, for all of us.*

*This is what happened to me, this is what I could not speak about.
Every breath I take, are you still watching me?*

(All characters and incidents are nonfictional.)

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