

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

GOSIA LEHMANN & VALERIAN BLOS - SUBSTANCE OF POWER

Opening reception: 8th September 2023, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 8th - 23rd September 2023

Dinner performances: 15th & 17th September 2023, 7 pm

In a dimmed space, a lavish banquet is being prepared. Under soft red lights, miniatures of historical artefacts are presented next to neurone-shaped ceramic dishes and cutlery. Some of the objects are void-black, sucking in all the light, while others are of alluring silver.

The banquet table is covered by piles of vermillion-red sand. Architectural elements representing power are slowly crumbling over the course of the exhibition. Glossy ceramic 'Loose Lips' placed on crystal platters are whispering the table gossip and rumours.

When power slips through one's hand like sand, when greed for a colour drives one mad, when hunger for strength makes one eat poison - the spatial installation *Substance of Power* delves into these moments of extremes and allows to take a fleeting glimpse at these most curious struggles of control and domination.

Substance of Power is Gosia Lehmann's and Valerian Blos' ongoing research, examining the relationship between chemical substances and different forms of power.

The starting point of the work is the story of ancient Chinese emperors who swallowed quicksilver in a bid to become immortal. However, instead of reaching eternal life they fell into paranoid-depressive states caused by mercury poisoning, contributing to fatally bad decisions that influenced the fate of the whole empire.

Gosia Lehmann and Valerian Blos look into the history of substances, which were often reserved for privileged ruling classes, but eventually turned out to be corrupting for the mind - whether it's lead used as a sweetener by the aristocrats of Ancient Rome or in make-up by the French bourgeoisie, or rumours of Putin's acts of roid rage under the influence of anabolic steroids.

Decisions about a food's availability, religious diets and what makes something an expensive delicacy are rarely up to ordinary people. Food was always a vehicle of power. When an exclusive food suddenly becomes its consumer's end, what then? The exhibition is activated by a diner-performances taking place on 15th and 17th September (reservation required).

Credits and thanks to:

Text contributions: Andy King, Theresa Reimann-Dubbers, Matias Loikala

Voice-over: Theresa Reimann-Dubbers

Performers: Maryna Makarenko, Cristina Negucioiu

Sound: Gabriel Kleber

About the artists

Gosia Lehmann and Valerian Blos are artist-designer duo based in Berlin, collaborating since 2017. In their practice, they combine research with participatory experiences. They work across sculptures, installations, and performances. Through temporary setups and brief moments, they aim to intimately engage the audience. Together they co-founded Lagoon Parliament (2019) and project space Solaris (2020) where they investigate the potentiality of collaboration and artists self-organisation. Gosia and Valerian are teaching at University of Arts in Berlin and exhibited together among others at Tama Art University Tokyo, 'Good Design Week' Design Lounge Tokyo, 'Work in Progress Festival' at CYENS, Nicosia, Natural History Museum Berlin and Bundesgartenschau (Federal-Garden-Biennial) Weimar.

Hošek Contemporary

Established by Petr Hošek in 2016, Hošek Contemporary is a gallery and art residency located on a historical cargo ship next to Fischerinsel in Mitte, Berlin. The gallery focuses primarily on site-specific pieces, performing arts and experimental sound works. During the spring and summer months, the gallery is hosting weekly improvised and experimental music installations, with local and international musicians.

MS Heimatland

Built in 1910 in Fürstenberg an der Oder, MS Heimatland was initially operating under the name Ida and used for transporting coal to Charlottenburg. After the Second World War, the 58-meter long cargo ship was renamed Heimatland, meaning "homeland". Until the 90s, the ship was sailing on Elbe and Havel, moving other boats, sand and chipping. It served for artistic and cultural purposes for the first time in 2002, when German sculptor Christiane Möbus chose it for her Nackte Tatsache Tatsache project. Finally, in March 2018, Heimatland became the main exhibition space and artist residency of Hošek Contemporary. The boat is permanently anchored in the historic port of Berlin.

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