



Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, *The Soft Spot*, 2021. (film still)

Nathalie DJURBERG & Hans BERG *The Soft Spot*

Opening: Wednesday, September 15, 2021; 6pm – 9pm
September 16 - December 18, 2021
From Tuesday to Saturday, 11am - 7 pm

Gió Marconi is very pleased to announce *The Soft Spot*, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Through stop-motion video, sound, sculpture and large-scale installations, Djurberg & Berg create stories that investigate themes of sexuality, lust, submission, fear, loss, jealousy, exploitation and greed.

The artists develop narratives that are at once comical and seductive, erotic and violent and that frequently hint at the absurd. Their surreal, psychologically charged works always deal with human and animalistic desires.

Having collaborated for almost two decades, the artists work completely intuitively each in their own medium, without a prewritten script, storyboard or a predetermined plot: Djurberg has developed a distinctive style of filmmaking where she produces elaborate environments and puppets out of clay, plasticene, wire and foam while the musician and composer Berg is in charge of the music. He produces the atmospheric sound and adds the hypnotic music to Djurberg's animations.

The combination of suggestive pictorial worlds, sculpture and particular sound is the Swedish duo's trademark.

On view in the gallery's anteroom is Djurberg & Berg's most recent video, *The Soft Spot*. The adjoining gallery space is transformed into a dramatically lit enchanted garden, a floral jewelry case inhabited by a colourful variety of varying flower sculptures.

The video centers on tactility, haptics and sensuality - themes that Djurberg & Berg have already given attention to in previous works: *The Soft Spot's* characters are a playful walrus that languidly guards and protects a sparkling diamond, a multi-armed man in search of said precious stone who is trying to outsmart the animal, a redhead fondling her naked body and the recurring hand of the artist kneading dough. All these sensuous and extremely tactile scenes culminate in the greedy man's discovery of a shiny pearl. In the video, a sensual, protective and caring feminine world is being juxtaposed with its intrusive, aggressive masculine counterpart.

The video also explores the meaning of the flower sculptures and what they represent – something sought-after and precious that needs protection.

The work additionally seems to suggest that greed and an aggressive, feisty behavior ultimately pay off in one form or another.

All of last year, Djurberg & Berg have worked on a new series of wall, floor and leaning flower sculptures which are also called *The Soft Spot*. Flowers have been a recurring motif in their oeuvre. Ever since their vast installation at the 2009 Venice Biennale, for which they had received the Silver Lion for best emerging artists, the duo has been interested in flowers and their

numerous connotations. The wild secret garden of the Biennale piece that felt like a floral underworld was the first proof of that. Over the years, the artists kept returning to the flower theme as they continued to be intrigued by the language that flowers can convey: that a lily stands for purity, a violet for modesty, a daffodil for rebirth and a new beginning or a red rose for love and romance etc. Also the fact that, in former times, flowers were used to communicate hiddenly when actual communication was forbidden or not possible. Additionally intriguing is, that by their nature, flowers are a memento mori as they represent the life cycle from shy bud to beautiful blossom to withering plant.

The combination of all these sublayers of a flower's meaning, its association with femininity and not least its beauty, delicateness and wildness continue to fascinate Djurberg & Berg.

This new body of work is completely different in look from any of the previous flower sculptures. This new group has started organically, with a real tree trunk with small mushrooms and flowers. Out of this first log a group of other sculptures has emerged.

In 2022, the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Lyon will be hosting a Djurberg & Berg solo show.

Important solo exhibitions include: Fondazione Prada, Shanghai (2021); Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore (2019); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2019); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2018); Stavanger Art Museum, Stavanger (2017); Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2016); ARoS Kunstmuseum, Aarhus (2015); Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow (2013); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2012); New Museum, New York (2012); Camden Arts Centre, London (2011); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2011); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2011); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2008); Kunsthalle Winterthur, Winterthur (2007).

Djurberg & Berg's work has been featured in group exhibitions at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humblebæk; Fundação Serralves, Porto; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf; Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin; Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

The artists' works are represented in the collections of: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Malmö Konstmuseum, Malmö; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Sprengel Museum, Hannover; Goetz Collection, Munich; Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf; Weserburg Museum of Modern Art, Bremen; Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich; GAM, Turin; Fondazione Prada, Milan, among others.