

Bread and Digestifs

27 January — 19 March 2022

With works by
Eleni Bagaki
Carina Brandes
Anastasia Douka
Francesco Gennari
Sophie Gogl
Lisa Holzer
Christian Jankowski
Jiří Kovanda
Soshiro Matsubara
Orestis Mavroudis
Maria Nikiforaki
Daniel Stempffer
Marina Sula and
Philipp Timischl
a short film by Jørgen Leth
and a hand axe

Curated by
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In addition to fat and protein, humans primarily need carbohydrates for their metabolism. The WHO recommends a 55-75% calorie content of carbohydrates in the diet. Bread can deliver that. It is compact energy and a staple food due to its ease of manufacture, storage and transport. You need bread to function. You earn bread by working. You work so that you have something to drink, something to eat, something to wear and something to sleep in. Those who earned themselves a place to sleep can seclude. But isn't isolation the downside of privacy? Bread also becomes hard if it lies around for too long. But if you have a stone in your stomach, you still have to digest it.

A stone in your hand, on the other hand, can be a tool. The stone in the exhibition used to be a tool a long time ago. Actually, the hand axe is the first tool to be used by humans. It's unknown what it was used for. But it's obvious that it had one or more functions connected to basic human needs.

Just a stone's throw away in history is the house that provides shelter. In the show, Jiří Kovanda made one out of sugar. Sugar is sweet; sugar has not been always available -as it is today- and sugar tends to melt away under rain and heat. Thus, it is obviously not the best material for a house, but something that people like to have around them.

The bread by Daniel Stempffer is nothing edible. It's a 3D print made after scans. During the pandemic, the only unregulated activity left in the public space of Hong Kong was individual sports. The artist used the salt of his sweat to bake bread (that provides energy for more sporting activities). Thus, the 3D print is an archiving of the cycles of absorbing and releasing energy during the pandemic.

The snail on the photograph of Francesco Gennari also goes in circles. Having lost its footing on a dollop of whipped cream, it starts to turn around itself instead of getting any further.

In Carina Brandes's photograph, the artist is hanging on a string to dry in the sun, like the textiles next to

her. The human becomes inactive, the subject becomes an object, pausing in a state of awaiting its reactivation in a brighter future.

In her painting, Eleni Bagaki lets herself „be immersed under the sun“. Only the feet are sticking out of the water, becoming a fragment of the body- just like her „standing hand“ that is an image of a body part and not an actual body, more like the debris of an ancient sculpture that once portrayed an individual now forgotten.

Philipp Timischl's depiction of a young man goes into an opposite direction. He seems highly active, trained and muscular. His self-optimization becomes manifest in building his body, thus also embodying an object. The man and the woman in Jørgen Leth's film are presented in a way that one would rather expect to see in an animal documentary. We observe our objects of interest during their everyday activities, some eccentric performances and we experience their weak moments in order to learn about „the perfect human“.

In Christian Jankowski's video, we see him walk into a supermarket with a bow in his hands. He is on the prowl, but what he is hunting down are processed foods and goods that he pierces with arrows. He is going back to the roots, drastically ironing out the alienations and abstractions of modern life.

Sophie Gogl's painting is an enlargement of an objet trouvé (found object): The cap of a Fanta bottle. On an inscription, it asks the buyer to recycle it, thus claiming the status of a speaking subject (requesting to be treated like an object that has lost its use) - while also reducing the role of the consumer to a passive one.

A still life of consumer goods by Marina Sula kidnaps the formal language of advertising photography to exaggerate the banality of the things that surround us. Another one shows two motorcyclists sleeping on a boat, with their armor and helmets taken down - vulnerable for a moment before they rush away again.

The tin lid of Anastasia Douka's work is perforated with the word „sex“, connecting the world of food and bodily desires. But it also raises associations to things that were conserved (in masses) and suddenly emerge again.

Lisa Holzer's grapes play with being objects of desire: they „(always) hang too high (for almost everyone), they remain a promise, they are not to reach like the positive magical effects of the trickle-down-effect. They trickle downstairs and are not to be found anywhere.“

The grapes in Maria Nikiforaki's video are pressed between the chest of a man and the feet of a woman. The collaborative making of wine here shows its erotic potential between excess and expenditure and points towards an alternative, more pleasurable idea of economy.

In the two paintings by Soshiro Matsubara, two heads are depicted kissing each other. The protagonists are Oskar Kokoschka and Alma Mahler, who had an affair over the course of 3 years that ended abruptly in 1914. It's all about tragic love and loss and its recurring commemoration.

Finally, Orestis Mavroudis's „Note on Death #5“ depicts the 16 orders of soil taxonomy in a side view of the depth of 110 cm. The cut-outs represent the gap between 30 and 110 cm, in which a coffin is normally buried. And that's where we turn into humus, becoming a good foundation for new forms of life.

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