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Striving for the Significant Other (2022)

Martina Grlić
Hypermnnesia II

May 13 to June 5, 2022
Opening May 13, 6-8pm

39 E Broadway, 404
New York, New York

(New York, NY) Fragment is pleased to present the first US solo exhibition of Croatian painter Martina Grlić, *Hypermnnesia II*. Borrowing its title from a psychological condition marked by abnormally vivid memories and the lucid retention of a large number of seemingly insignificant details, often the result of trauma, Grlić's *Hypermnnesia II* uses fragmentary imagery to deconstruct the politics of memory and the contested space of reminiscence in post-socialist society. In an evocation of surrealist strategies, the artist, in her own words, "uses an aesthetic language that moves between reality and dreams... materializing memories by transferring them into the field of the real."

A rose and a piece of lace float as if falling against a smudged and leaden sky in *Striving for the Significant Other (2022)*; meanwhile a translucent child's tiara hovers upon an unclear verdant plane in *The Crown (2022)*—the dream of a princess not to be. At once transcendent, symbolic, surreal, and redolent, Grlić's hyperbolized scraps of uncertain remembrance—derived from an archive of family photographs—address the unstable affect of memory and the role of erasure in the formation of subjectivity and selfhood. In *Hypermnnesia II*, Grlić floats fragmentary images on an undifferentiated haze of abstraction, mining the ultimately arbitrary cathexis of her childhood

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experience—especially as it regards symbolic representations of an intimate mythology of the feminine—pointing towards recollections at once personal and political.

The intimate, in Grlić's oeuvre, is also ideological, and the ideological intimate; hers is an exploration of the symbolic interpolation of what is meant to be the feminine, in socialist society and elsewhere. The striking scarlet bow, featured in *The Bow* (2022), recalls not only intimate feminine decorations on the head of a child, but also the accountment of public celebration or commemoration, announcing the gift of the glory of the state. Wrapped, like the little girl, in a bow. Here it is decontextualization as a strategy for critical understanding which drives the compositional conceits of the artist. Likewise, the images of costume jewelry and faux flowers in *Plastic Gems* (2022) or *Fake Flowers* (2022)—not unlike in *Striving for the Significant Other* (2022) as well as *'Til Death Do Them Part* (2022)—function as a tribute to a fallacy: “as carriers of a future feminine,” the artist intones, which like the objects themselves, is as ‘fake’ as it is a cypher for and of intimation—devoutly to be wished. Yet the memories remain: real, lucid, acute, and unreliable.

Grlić's images present the uncertainty of memory seeking to question the learned ideologies that participate in the formation of consciousness and identity—and their relation to personal and political reality. As Valerie Mindlin states in *Artforum*, for Grlić, “what's recollected is not only fleeting as an unavoidable casualty of time's passing but is inherently contested as a remainder of Yugoslavia's transformation from the socialist state in which she was born to a network of European-style capitalist democracies, with the attendant self-imposed erasure and reconstruction of the national past.” Thus do the artist's works, replete with nostalgic imagery always surfacing and sinking with lurid appeal, become reflections of a public social stance, tableaux of a set of fantasies—even portraits of naive superstitions—which nonetheless persist in contemporary cultural imagining.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Martina Grlić (b 1982, Croatia) was educated at the Academy of Fine Arts, Zagreb, Croatia. She has exhibited at Museum of Mali lošinj; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb; Kunstlerhaus, Vienna; Ningbo Museum of Art, Ningbo, China, and the National Museum, Gdanjsk, Poland. She lives and works in Zagreb, Croatia.

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For further information and images, please contact brooke@fragment.gallery