

Aileen Murphy

*food that I would feed my lover*

24.06.–06.08.2022

Deborah Schamoni is pleased to present the second gallery exhibition by Aileen Murphy.

In Murphy's paintings, figurations out of loose uncontrolled body parts meet one another. They bite, they lick, they tease, they taste, they kiss, they pet, they feel, they love. Sensual and humorous, dark and witty, sexy and cute are the dynamic compositions, whose playfulness intensifies in the accompanying drawings, or *routines* (2022) as they are called.

Among the paintings, a headless figure, *Companion* (2022), runs energetically through the picture space, strong black outlines, their breasts pointed, their hands clenched in a fist, they remind us of a superheroine of the 1980s who is always on the spot. Comforting in a different way is the puppy, *Softener* (2022), head turned to the side, overlong tongue sticking out, legs intertwined. Another decapitated body is flirting with the sun against purple background; the two exchange some kind of bodily fluid (*Hi! Arrangement*, 2022). On a yellow ground a berry pink mouth shows crooked teeth (*Age*, 2022), two sky blue butts bump into each other just before they get eaten (*Wednesday*, 2022). *Guest* (2022) is greeting the audience upside down. A harlequin-like head, balancing on a foot, with a big smile and a bright-yellow collar, on which an arm is resting and some breasts are hanging downward, headless. Murphy's characters look familiar yet eerie and odd.

The vivid painterly gestures suggest exuberant joy and stimulation, but seem quite more complex upon closer inspection: the surface consists of scribbles and marks, translucent watercolor base layers reveal traces of erasures, and text blurbs are scratched in the wet paint. Oil paint is pressed directly from the tube, and expressive splashes are next to caressing details. With their intensely buzzing, juicy, and glowing presence of color the paintings offer true visual pleasure to the viewer. With regard to the exhibition title, this raises the question of who is feeding whom. Who is the lover to be fed? Another person, the audience, the paintings themselves?

bell hooks quotes psychiatrist M. Scott Peck and his definition of love as „the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.“<sup>1</sup> Murphy's paintings originate from this very will, essential and courageous, in order to grow. Feeding is not only about nourishment but also about pleasure.

Bite me, touch me, lick me, tease me, taste me, kiss me, pet me, feel me, love me.

*Over and over, forever and ever, hot hot, something.*

Text: Miriam Bettin

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<sup>1</sup> M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, 1978, in: bell hooks, *All about love: new visions*, New York 2001, p. 4.