

Blue Velvet Projects

“A FAMILIAR HOLE”

BY PRICE

23.09-29.10.2022

Blue Velvet Projects is pleased to announce A Familiar Hole, a solo exhibition by Swiss-Brazilian artist PRICE (1986, Rio de Janeiro). Working across performance, musical composition, and sculpture PRICE explores the breakdown of institutional and cultural conventions through the representation of bodily gestures. A Familiar Hole stages a theatrical encounter that collides structures of established power with Guy Hocquenghem’s concept of an “equivocal mask”. PRICE’S dramatic set pieces at the center of the exhibition reflect an ability to move through often-contradictory forms of desire under different guises.

Snaking through the gallery’s lower level is a large banquet table set with unique glass-blown tableware — plates, soup bowls, napkins, utensils, and wine glasses. The work allows PRICE to explore different performances and positions of power: those who feed, are fed, are invited in, and the ‘Parasito’, or person who dines at another’s table, eating their food and in turn offering nice company. Polite ambiguity, in other words, is how one gets through dinner: by switching sides, breaking wholes into smaller, less appetizing parts, by desiring and counter-desiring.

The delicate tableware projects at once a kind of glistening abundance but also — and revealed on closer inspection—shapes bent and and cleaved open. This transformation across a single form — from robust to deformed — highlights the processes of disintegration that have developed out of PRICE’S multi-sensory live performances. These objects begin to reflect the competing desires often associated with hunger: missing, needing, being satisfied, wanting more, feeling full. The textures of glass also reverberate around the space in other architectural elements inviting multiple and sometimes elusive points of view. Stage lighting illuminates competing focal points, while traffic mirrors and other reflective surfaces reveal new information hidden in plain sight.

Within the art world, the dining table has long been the dominant form of sociality. In performance and social practices, the table has encouraged participation and collectivity, while also imposing a set of spatial boundaries and hierarchies. The table’s power rests in its material abundance, as well as its social influence, and it is this bourgeois matrix of influence that PRICE elevates and ultimately skewers. In emphasizing both the oppressive and liberatory possibilities of the dining table, PRICE is influenced by Sara Ahmed’s analysis of the table, and the critical focus on the web of invisible labor that makes its functioning possible. Instead of a site of centralized (oppressive) knowledge production, the table (used for both work and dining) becomes a site of assembly.

A Familiar Hole’s many dissonances heighten the viewer’s senses, inviting them to navigate the exhibition based not on familiar referents but on intuition. For PRICE, dissonance is a kind of respiration that embodies both automation and anticipation. The dining table also aligns with the stomach: an apparatus that craves, assimilates, and then breaks down. A pristine table setting transforms into a canvas of spills, tears, and waste. Host, guest, head of the table, plus one; everybody is a Parasito (para — next to; sitos — food). Positions of power and influence have not disappeared, but are unstable, up for grabs.

As a final gesture, PRICE has composed dinner music for piano to amplify the exhibition’s performance of pleasant ambience. Interrupting the melody, however, is PRICE’S own recorded singing, which emerges as chewed-up and broken linguistic fragments. The musical composition, another equivocal mask, neutralises or hides the political meaning of the table and its settings. A Familiar Hole showcases PRICE’S polymorph theatricality and constructs a dramatic arc from the concrete to the ephemeral, the political to the personal.

– Annie Goodner

Blue Velvet Projects

PRICE (Rio de Janeiro, 1986*)

His work is characterized by elaborate soundscapes, costumes, and stage design often developed in collaborative constellations. His productions play with the audience's expectations of the exposed, ostensibly authentic self of the performer, who emotes before their eyes.

SELECTED PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS

2022 Echo Correspondence, Vienna, Austria

Ephemera Festival, Warsaw, Poland

Perrrformat, Zürich Art Weekend, Zürich, Switzerland

Workshop Back to the Leave with Michele Rizzo, Lateral Roma, Rome, Italy

2021 PRICE concert performance, True Sentiments, Bourse de Commerce, Pinault Collection, Paris, France

Group exhibition - Movie Buff, Allstars, Lausanne, Switzerland

Proximities, Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome, Italy

Swiss Art Awards, Basel, Switzerland

2020 PRICE joins Scalable Skeletal Escalator by Isabel Lewis, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

Prologue: Mantras for a Club, Stadtgalerie Bern, Switzerland

Sequences of Mantras for a Club (sequences), My Wild Flag at MDT, Stockholm, Switzerland

Sequences of Mantras for a Club (sequences), Bela Maré, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

2019 Sequences of Mantras for a Club (sequences), How To Show Up, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Sequences of Mantras for a Club (sequences), PAM residency, Los Angeles, USA

Melodies are so far my best friend, Beursschouwburg, Brussels, Belgium

Melodies are so far my best friend, Tanzhaus Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

2018 Where Do You Wanna Go Today (Variations), Swiss Performance Art Award, Switzerland

process sharing of: Melodies are so far my best friend, NAVEL Los Angeles, USA

Where Do You Wanna Go Today (Variations) Hit Gallery, San Francisco, USA

Where Do You Wanna Go Today (Variations), Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland

RESIDENCIES

2022 PIVO Sao Paulo, Recherche Residency, Sao Paulo, Brasil

2021 Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi, Swiss cultural foundation Pro Helvetia, Venice, Italy

ETOPIA Center for Art and Technology, Zaragoza, Spain

2020 La Becque, Vevey, Switzerland

Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome, Italy