

Apparatus 22 Of Pleasure: The Learnings and Strange Fortunes of Atletica Ideal

Suprainfinit Gallery

22 Mantuleasa Street, Bucharest, Romania

Period: 16.11.2022. - 28.01.2023

Wednesday-Saturday, 12-6 pm

The solo exhibition of the art collective Apparatus 22 is a truly daring proposal for a major leap into the future ~ the unknown ~ utopia, in order to bring into dialogue fresh thoughts about human-technology entanglements and to imagine love, desire, and pleasure from non-human perspectives.

A series of object-based and narrative installations reveals the adventures of a hybrid AI character (called Atletica Ideal) who acts between our reality and the utopian universe SUPRAINFINIT, imagined and created step by step in the past 7 years by Apparatus 22.

Certain essential elements of the Apparatus 22's art practice are crystalizing the exhibition: the long-lasting experiments of the collective to transform artistic research about the future ~ the unknown ~ utopia into complex narratives, working leather into magical~visceral~kink sculptural forms, the hyperbolic intensity and queer sensibility imprinted on perspectives that may be included in the sphere of science-fiction.

The site-specific installation *The Owls Are Not What They Seem* – a curtain that is unexpectedly positioned in the centre of the gallery –is structuring the space in three main alveoli. Taking into consideration the history of the curtain as a mechanism of covering and uncovering, Apparatus 22 hacks the category and turns it into a distinct object. In the midst of the real it becomes a membrane between the seen and the unseen, a portal of the imagination to a different realm.

Besides the metaphoric gesture of covering/hiding and uncovering of a utopic space, SUPRAINFINIT, the countless magnetic VHS tapes that compose the curtain are signs of a nonlinear unfolding of time and of a narration line that is perpetually in-transformation, with infinite entry and exit points.

Soaked in the nostalgia of a past era, when the representation of images was still dependent on a physical support, the quaint and useless VHS tapes – (ex)domestic

archives of cinematographic utopias – become a prosthetic device in the process of imagining a new universe.

The whole exhibition has as a starting point “About the curious digressions of Atletica Ideal. A report” – a radio show that was written and recorded in 2017, as part of the installation *THE CONTINUUM BROADCAST** (2015 - ongoing), exploring the exhausting attempts of Atletica Ideal to understand LOVE, this abstract human concept that they cannot feel.

Nothing remained untouched in this struggle: literature, *porn*, philosophy, music, cinema, but to no avail. An unexpected moment opens the narration towards a threesome climax. In order to make tangible the exhilarating experience of the story within the exhibition, Apparatus 22 produced two neon installations, “*my crusade for love*” and “*metaphysics and flesh crushed in pleasure*”, quotes from “*About the curious digressions of Atletica Ideal. A report*”.

* *Plunging into the history of the radio as a medium of information and entertainment, but also of manipulation and empowerment, THE CONTINUUM BROADCAST is a sound work that explores narratives about love, pleasure, sexuality, from queer and nonhuman perspectives. It uses language, narration, voice, and sound in order to represent inaccessible or invisible contours and spaces, producing new forms of knowledge and an enticing emotional experience.*

Touching, fierce, dreamy, activist, queer, and caring, the work is present only in private homes as a free public service that consists of a listening session and a dialogue (approximately two hours).

You can find additional details about the work and how to request a listening session [here](#).

The opening of this Pandora box of emotions, love, pleasure, sex, from the perspective of artificial intelligence has proved the perfect occasion for the collective to advance a several other incandescent ideas / works on animism, empathy, attempts to imagine the world without being overwhelmed by a human logic and human limitations.

Transgressing human categories (and binaries) such as good-bad, moral-amoral, possible-impossible etc., the most unexpected thing takes places in the Apparatus 22 imaginary: Atletica Ideal’s plunges into art history are becoming *Sex Tapes* with works of art, something that was never heard before.

An A.I. having sex with art?
How can this be?
SF, but totally mindfuck.

SEX TAPES turns into a series of musical video stories about love from a nonhuman perspective, in which desire-protection-care-destruction come together with the hyperbolic ecstasy felt in front of art.

As such, the history of art becomes a kinky paradise, like those shadowy alleys, infamous in the early iterations of pleasure gardens: convoluted with pleasures that are raw, oily and nourishing, confusing and irrepressible.

For Apparatus 22 it is equally intriguing and inciting to think of pleasure and sex from a perspective conjuring animism, sympathetic techno-magic, the extreme blurring of the boundaries between *art-the artist-love-technology*.

In an era when technology develops much more rapidly than the ethical reflection on its impact (followed by an even slower legal framework, bent by corporate interests), the sex tapes of a multi-gender techno-hybrid – *Sex Tape VIII (Atletica Ideal x Th Scream by Edvard Munch)* and *Sex Tape III (Atletica Ideal x Lovers of Beaubourg by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries)* – are a progressive reflection, personal and political on the process of extending our limits, imagination and understanding of the future.

Clumsy and driven by the imagination, fragile, shamanic, and imbued with a very particular logic, the group of works - *program me for ecstatic abandon /// Banner 11:11 /// Banner 23:23 /// I gave myself some Air de Paris /// solid compost of my dreams // As twilight uncrowns the shade* - unfolds a ritual space to experiment with the essential problems in the imagining of love and sex from a very different perspective – the nonhuman one. In this approach coined - *Fluxus-like prototyping* – the works' titles is just as important as the production of the works, as they function as spells for the overcoming of today's arbitrary limits.

“?” - Riddles (in the Annex)

As an appendix to the exhibition *Of Pleasure: The Learnings and Strange Fortunes of Atletica Ideal* and an extension of the provocation addressed by Apparatus 22 to the visitors to plunge in a utopic future, the works showcased in the *black box* of the gallery configure a mysterious and generous context for the imagination, commencing from a set of riddles written by the collective.

Activated as a durational performance (taking place on November 19 and 26, December 3, January 21 and 28) in which the public is invited to move ideas about the future with Apparatus 22, from a state of being unknown and anticipated to a state of being

understood and named, the riddles are a starting point for more profound exercises to imagine the future in the reality of SUPRAINFINIT universe, where hope is used as a critical tool.

“?” is equally a pretext for social interaction and intangible exchanges, scattered with humour and references from pop culture and multiple other domains.

Cultural project co-funded by the Administration of the National Cultural Fund.

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Apparatus 22 is a transdisciplinary art collective, initiated in January 2011 in Bucharest, RO by the current members – Erika Olea, Maria Farcaș, Dragoș Olea – together with Ioana Nemeș (1979-2011). Beginning with 2015 they are working between Bucharest, Brussels and SUPRAINFINIT utopian universe.

They see themselves as a collective of daydreamers, citizens of many realms, researchers, poetic activists and (failed) futurologists interested in exploring the intricate relationships between economy, politics, gender studies, social movements, religion, and fashion system in order to understand contemporary society. An important part of their work is dedicated to shaping queer futurities.

The work of Apparatus 22 was presented at La Biennale di Venezia 2013, Kunsthalle Wien (AT), MUMOK, Vienna (AT), BOZAR, Brussels (BE), Museion, Bolzano (IT), Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles (BE), Kunsthal Gent (BE), Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz (AT), Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (DE), Contemporary Art Museum (MNAC), Bucharest (RO), La Triennale di Milano (IT), TRAF0 Gallery, Budapest (HU), Futura, Prague (CZ), Ujazdowski Castle CCA, Warsaw (PL), Onomatopee Eindhoven (NL), TIME MACHINE BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART, D-0 ARK UNDERGROUND, Konji (BIH), Osage Foundation (Hong Kong), Closer Art Centre, Kiev (UA), Brukenthal Museum Contemporary Art Gallery, Sibiu (RO), CIAP, Hasselt (BE), Barriera, Turin (IT), Survival Kit festival, LCCA Riga (LV), Autostrada Biennale Prizren (XK), MAK, Vienna (AT), Steirischer Herbst, Graz (AT), Drodesea Festival, Dro (IT), TRIUMF AMIRIA. Museum of Queer Culture (Ro) etc.