

TITLE: The Good, the Bad and the Sweet

ARTIST: Mona Broschár

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TEXT:

You pass by a bakery and see a soft, springy, yummy piece of cake through the window glass. A pleasing sensation tickles your salivary glands while you step in the shop. Before sinking your teeth into the pink glittery frosting and tasting the striped sponge cake, your pupils have already dilated. Sugar, egg, milk and flour go through your throat releasing dopamine that your brain interprets as pleasure, even happiness. The shiny sugar-soaked cherry adds the final note to the perfect energy boost you need for the afternoon.

An hour later, your glucose levels crash. You are left with the craving for more of that shortcut to a blissful moment. We know what comes next, we have information from nutritionists and from our own experience with sweet treats: the addiction, the stomach ache, the caries if we have bad teeth, the guilty feeling, the “I shouldn’t but...”, and the “I know it’s bad for me, but just another bite”. Happiness has its dark side, nothing is either good or bad per se. Sweetness inhabits both.

In a simplistic reflection, we could say that sugar is an immediate symbol of the eternal philosophical debate on the dialectics of the good and the bad. It is both the left shoulder angel and the right shoulder demon whispering to your ear.

Mona Broschár’s (apparent) candy-cotton universe doesn’t fit in easy dichotomies, but in the hybridity inherent to human existence. Although at some point in her trajectory she decided not to depict any human presence in her works, they distil humanity all over. The ironic title of the work *Size matters*, combined with the fleshy colour of the cake, breaks masculinity conventions as the artist points at what could be a skirt made out of a pleated paper baking cup. The salami piece in *Hard feelings* is closer to resemble a human manufactured clay tile on a surface of marble, more than a meaty edible item.

That entertainment of artificiality and synthetic aesthetics is combined with anthropomorphic, animal and botanical elements to create cyborg realities that amalgamate aspects of Broschár’s familiar environment. The two guards of the exhibition (*Guardian I and II*) with their delicate petals surrounding teathy and eye-shaped discs and their feather leaves are both flora and fauna. The smiley faces from the vases’ reflection connect with the artist’s humanised digital universe.

The paintings are worked over weeks, while Broschár adds layers of colour to reflect volume, light and the right amount of rhythm so they get to their prime, to reflect a sense of fragile balance. The artist’s perfectionist methodology is transmitted onto the canvas, but beyond the interest in reaching that stage of accomplishment there is a curiosity for the transformation that the elements present in the paintings will suffer afterwards. How soon will the water of that vase start to have a greenish jellied texture? Will

the burger fall out of the ice-cream cone (see *Balance*) and be spread all over the two-coloured background set?

Hers are works that fit in a gap between reality and the representation of that reality. To do so, she finds mediators that help her to get to that space. For example, for *Himmel und Hölle* she asked herself what is one of the most common representations of a mermaid tail that we can find in our everyday lives. That brought her to focus on glittery mermaid costumes, instead of on real fish tails. In other works, such as *Toppings II* she chooses to depict the cherry that has been processed and conserved in sugar, instead of the cherry from the tree.

Besides using artificiality as an intermediary for reality, she, as a child of the internet, integrates digital and social media content as a means to connect with elements of her daily life. On occasions she playfully appropriates existing digital iconic imagery (the cherry, the food photos, the gradient background) or social media languages to offer a plot twist to the narrative she is working on. The work *Bff* takes its title from a common hashtag that normally accompanies two souls that stick, smile and pose together in the pictures, just like the stitched sausages, friends forever.

Common objects, a carefully picked palette and a sense of hybridity become pieces of a domino that connects the works together. Humanity is infused onto edible elements, inanimate elements and flower bouquets traversing Room 3 at L21 Palma. In *The Good, the Bad and the Sweet*, Broschár engages with transformation and the threshold in which she can capture elements in the zenith of their blooming, the 'put the cherry on the pie' moment. Anything that happens after that instant, it's in the viewer's mind to be created.

Aina Pomar Cloquell