

**IN MY  
NIGHT  
MARE  
THE**

UMORISMO MISTERIOSO (STEFAN TÄNASE & MARINA LUZ FERLA).

GAIA DEL SANTO,  
VIOLA MORINI & GIACOMO GIANNANTONIO

LAST TANGO SIHLQUIAI 274, 8005 ZÜRICH

28.7. – 16.8.2023

**TITLE  
WAS  
CUTE  
NESS**

CURATED BY VALERIA BRÜCKER & MARLENE KURZ

OPENING: THURSDAY, 27 JULY 2023, 6PM-10PM

# ***In My Nightmare The Title Was Cuteness***

Curated by Valeria Brücker and Marlene Kurz

Gaia Del Santo, Viola Morini & Giacomo Giannantonio, UMORISMO MISTERIOSO  
(Ștefan Tănase & Marina Luz Ferla)

28.07.23 – 16.08.23

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The exhibition 'In My Nightmare The Title Was Cuteness' brings together three positions that critically explore the potential of cuteness and cute aesthetics while dealing with its ambiguity. Associated as something innocent, small, pink, big eyed, soft, cuddly – this exhibition stresses the inherent complex power and violence structures of cuteness as well as its subversive and empowering aspects. What cuteness cannot do, is remain neutral. One could almost say it is a statement, an attitude, originally related to gender, ethnicity or class, but is now in the midst of redefining its possibilities and limits.

Manipulation through cuteness, especially in consumer culture, has an ominous connotation, as indicated in UMORISMO MISTERIOSO's work 'Advertisement (Gauloises 1978-2023)' (2023) which is an inquiry into how cuteness shapes ideals, morals, and values. While browsing magazines from the 70s and the 80s, the artist duo discovered grotesque and out of time fallen cigarette commercials. One advertisement for Gauloises cigarettes from 1978 specially captivated them since it promoted tobacco consumption through a wedding photography of a young, cute, freshly married couple. 'Advertisement (Gauloises 1978-2023)' is a reenactment of this advertisement. «It was quite revealing to us to see how the paradigm of cuteness shifted. While in the late 20th century, with the boom of economic growth, cute images were used to promote the sale of cigarettes. Today, these same images are used to discourage smoking with expressions such as 'Smoke can harm the health of your kids, your friends and family.'» (UMORISMO MISTERIOSO, 2023)

Gaia Del Santo's drawings 'The Ordinary' and 'Pygmalion' (2022) consist of image and text fragments that the artist collected from various social media accounts. The drawings are inspired by face filters and different types of masks, referencing for example Patrick Bateman's beauty routine in the horror movie *American Psycho* (2000). The drawings also address recent micro-trends such as 'Blokette' – a fashion style combining hyper-feminine connotated pieces such as ribbons with typically masculine-read items.

The three collages 'angel complex', 'machine girl', and 'bffs' (2022) by Gaia Del Santo reference Tumblr blog entries combining screenshots with diaristic poems and calligraphic writing. They're framed with rhinestones and pink ribbon stickers, exploring pop-cultural notions of girlhood and femininity as spectacle. Drawing on net cultural trends and methods of online self-representation, she tackles the connections to the attention economy and consumerism of the TikTok era.

In the exhibition, on the one hand, cultural understandings of cuteness are critically questioned, and on the other hand the dark, alien side of cuteness is illuminated as its own, relevant aesthetic category and almost forced upon the visitor as for example in the walk-in textile installation 'No child left behind' (2021) by the artist duo Giacomo Giannantonio and Viola Morini. For their first exhibition abroad, Giannantonio and Morini present a site-specific version of the installation, which for the first time contains two lamps to immerse visitors in a dystopian atmosphere as they enter the newly created 'room'. By incorporating bioplastics and Kitsch materials in their lamps, the duo engages with the optimistic genre of solar punk, a futuristic vision that incorporates science, subcultures, and activism.

On the outside of the installation, Giannantonio and Morini bring memes and random internet images back to the haptic by printing them on various textile materials and incorporating them into a patchwork of soft, delicate-looking fabrics floating in the space. While hearts, fur frames, and the colourful patches evoke a cute, homely aesthetic, the included, often politically loaded memes oscillate between sugarcoating pressing topics and a humorous survival strategy, addressing subjects such as capitalism, climate change and war. In this group exhibition, cuteness becomes an unrealisable utopia that achieves exactly the opposite through its compulsive urge to «sweeten life»: cuteness becomes a nightmare.

– Valeria Brücker and Marlene Kurz

**EXHIBITION VIEWS** Photos: Luca Klett











# UMORISMO MISTERIOSO (Ștefan Tănase & Marina Luz Ferla)

## BIO

UMORISMO MISTERIOSO is an artist duo founded in 2023 whose works explore the intersection between art and architecture. Marina Luz Ferla's practice is based on art and architecture research, with a strong interest in philosophy. At the same time, Ștefan Tănase is a multidisciplinary artist who works across various mediums, including printing, sculpture, and installations. Together, they elaborate thought-provoking installations by questioning how art is exhibited and how accessible it is to the public. Their work is characterized by a combination of performative and participatory methods, sometimes encouraging or discouraging engagement. Their works often include editorial projects that focus on the theoretical references at their works' base.



## UMORISMO MISTERIOSO

Advertisement (Gauloises 1978-2023)

Inkjet-print on metal billboard

Sheet 128 x 268.5 cm

Billboard 180 x 284.5 cm

Photo by Mindaugas Matulis



**UMORISMO MISTERIOSO**

*Advertisement (Gauloises 1978-2023)*

Inkjet-print on metal billboard

Sheet 128 x 268.5 cm

Billboard 180 x 284.5 cm

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daily routine is  
get out of bed, put on  
eyeliner and mascara,  
get back in bed, rot  
cutely



daily routine is  
get out of bed, put on  
eyeliner and mascara,  
get back in bed, rot  
cutely

*i'm not the same person  
i was two profile pictures ago  
but forever an upgrade  
of your stereotype*

heavenly



# Gaia Del Santo

## BIO

Gaia Del Santo (\*1999, Zurich) lives and works in Zurich. In her body of work she deals with forms of online self-representation, their conditions, and notions of the personal and private in the age of social media and the attention economy. She conceives of the personal as a socioculturally conditioned experience shaping behaviors, beliefs, and performances. Through installation, photography, and video, she explores these themes through the figure of the 20-something-year-old woman as the ideal consumer model, translating digitally conditioned experiences into physical space. In 2022 she completed her Bachelor in Fine Arts at the Zurich University of the Arts and received the ZHdK BA Prize for her thesis. Since graduating, Gaia Del Santo has had the opportunity to show her work at Plattform 23 at Espace Arlaud in Lausanne, Kunsthaus Glarus, Hotel Tiger and Toxi Space in Zurich, among others. At the Global Pop Cultures Festival 2022, she presented her thesis, which explores user behaviors and the information overload on the Internet. Gaia Del Santo is supported by Z-Kubator as part of the What's next\_Compass studio program and was nominated for the Pro Helvetia Förderpreis für junge Kunst 2023 for her work subtle fembot autopsy.



## Gaia Del Santo

*bffs, 2022*

Steel plate, ballpoint pen on paper, stickers on plastic sleeve

42 x 29.7 cm



**Gaia Del Santo**

*machine girl*, 2022

Steel plate, ballpoint pen on paper, stickers on plastic sleeve

42 x 29.7 cm



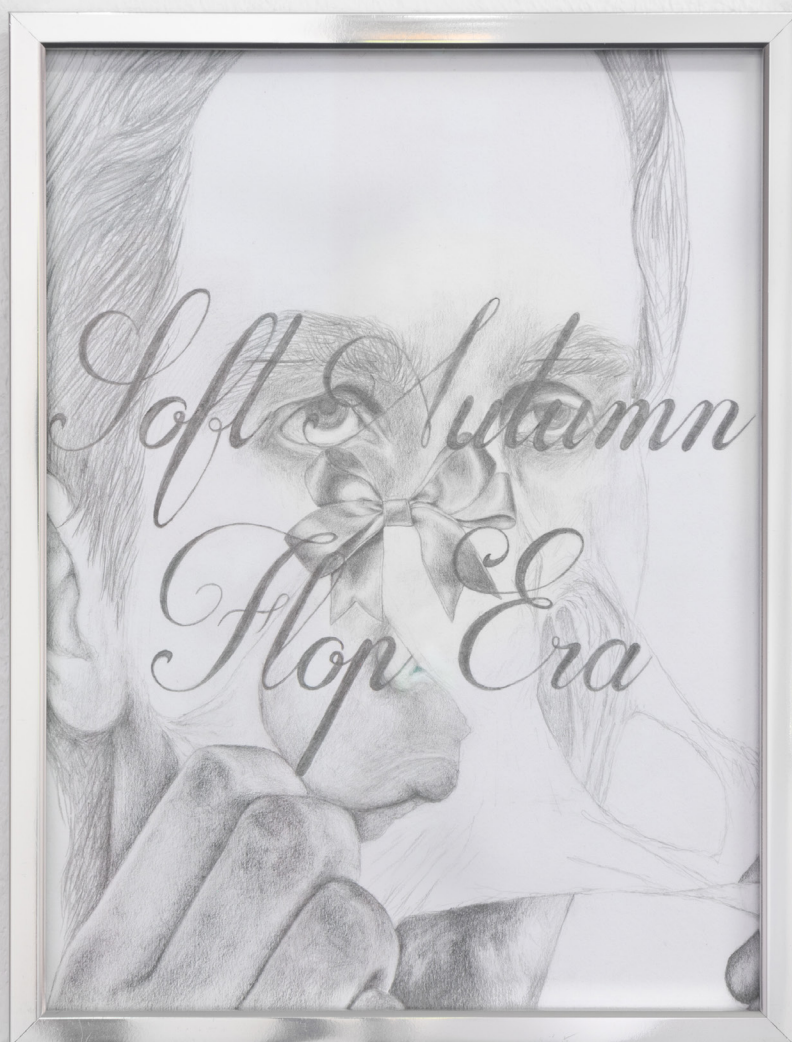
**Gaia Del Santo**

*angel complex*, 2022

Steel plate, ballpoint pen on paper, stickers on plastic sleeve

29.7 x 42 cm





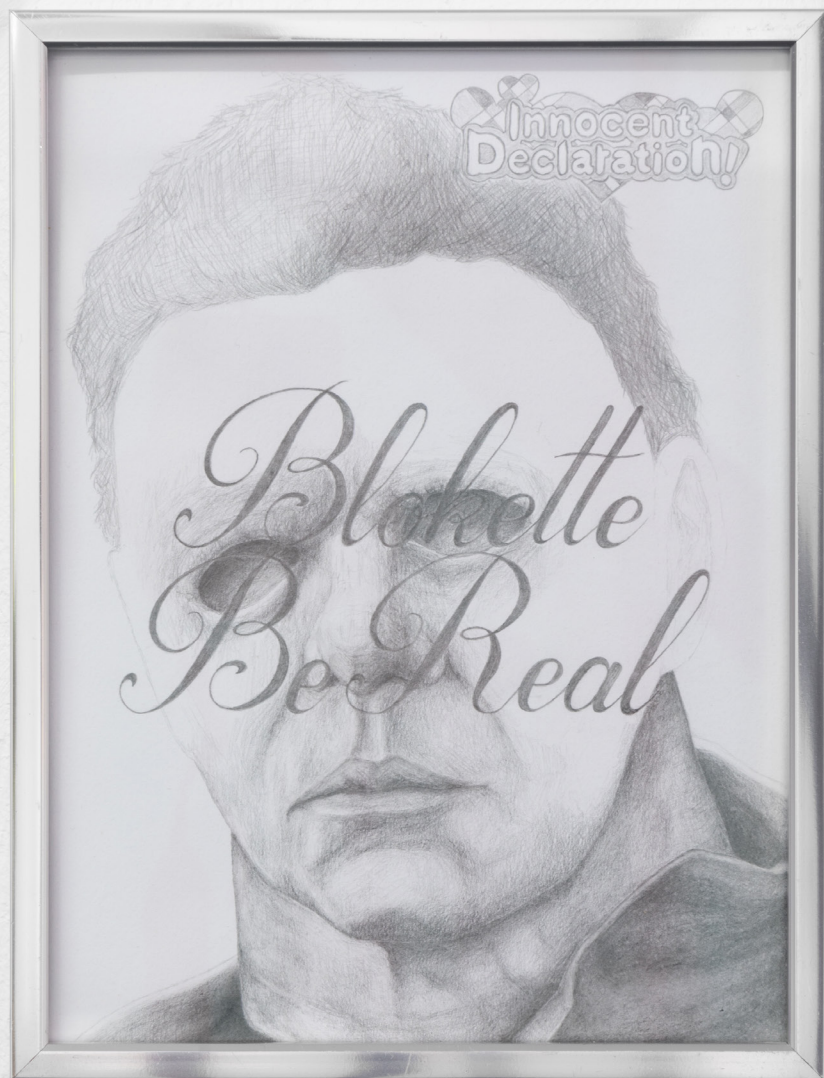
**Gaia Del Santo**

*The Ordinary, 2022*

Pencil on paper, aluminium frame

24 x 18 cm





**Gaia Del Santo**  
*Pygmalion*, 2022  
Pencil on paper, aluminium frame  
24 x 18 cm







## Giacomo Giannantonio and Viola Morini

### BIO

Giacomo Giannantonio (1998) and Viola Morini (1997) get to know each other during their studies at Brera Academy of Fine Arts and immediately begin to collaborate in various ways. In 2019, they curate their first offsite exhibition *Lo zoo di vetro* at the Bovisa gasometer in Milan. In 2020 they collaborate to create the visual identity of Pianeta Fresco by working on the website as designers. During 2021 they combine to create the duo exhibition *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND* at Dimora Artica (Milan) and later they move to Venice where they open Venice Luggage Deposit, an independent art space aimed at the lagoon art community. During 2022 they hold two workshops on DIY printing and wood working at Pianeta Fresco (Parma). In 2023 they get together again to produce the installation *Mud Puddling* exhibited at BASE Milano.



## Giacomo Giannantonio and Viola Morini

*No child left behind*, 2021

Site-specific textile installation

Variable dimensions





**Giacomo Giannantonio and Viola Morini**

*No child left behind*, 2021

Site-specific textile installation

Variable dimensions

## WORK LIST



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### Gaia Del Santo

*bfs, 2022*

Steel plate, ballpoint pen on paper, stickers on plastic sleeve

42 x 29.7 cm



### Gaia Del Santo

*machine girl, 2022*

Steel plate, ballpoint pen on paper, stickers on plastic sleeve

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**Gaia Del Santo**  
*angel complex*, 2022  
Steel plate, ballpoint pen on paper, stickers on plastic sleeve  
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*The Ordinary*, 2022  
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**Giacomo Giannantonio and Viola Morini**

*No child left behind*, 2021

Site-specific textile installation

Variable dimensions