

## Inside Job (Ula Lucińska and Michał Knychaus)

WILL SPREAD | 25/06 - 31/08/2024

Ula Lucińska and Michał Knychaus work together as the Inside Job duo. Their practice is focused on the use of different mediums and materials, which often leads to the creation of multi-layered, object-based environments. Many of their projects refer to catastrophic scenarios in which the hauntings from the past and futuristic speculations are intertwined. They are interested in the environmental, social and geopolitical changes that shape the present and influence the imaginarium of possible futures. By incorporating fiction as a working methodology they explore its self-fulfilling potential-forecasting dystopias and utopias to examine their possibilities and limitations.

For their second solo exhibition in Milan, the artists present a recent series of sculptures and assemblages. The central work, "Behind the mouths gate something is stirring, is flickering" consists of six objects that hang from the ceiling on a long, rhizomatic structure that also winds across the floor. The calyx-like forms were made from fragments of hand-dyed linen, silk and organza sewn together. The exterior of each form has a darkened color palette of moss, grays and browns. In some places, one can see glyphs that are difficult to decipher or fragments of impossible-to-read text. The interior, on the other hand, is organic, darker and red. The work reflects the inspiration from the plant world - especially the family of pitcher plants (Nepenthaceae) - carnivorous species that hunt insects, attracting them with their fragrance. Another association may also be the form of an empty cocoon or a moult from which something has hatched. The forms have been additionally waxed so that they appear wet, cracked, covered with a transparent layer. From the interiors emerge metallic, floral elements - characteristic of the oeuvre of the Inside Job duo.

In "Will Spread" what is associated with surgical, mechanical, and heavily industrial matter meets organic, plant-like, delicate and fragile elements (the cut-outs are designed to be very fine, easy to bend under the fingers). The detail of each work is an element that has been subjected to just such deliberate bending. The long, double-layered assemblages made of stainless steel were created from photographs of thistles overgrowing contemporary post-industrial ruins, which the Inside Job duo shoots during their explorations. As in other works from the previous "Diaphane" series, the thistles were juxtaposed with shapes taken from illustrations of a mysterious medieval 15th-century Voynich manuscript. The manuscript depicts plant species that are still unrecognized today, juxtaposing them with alchemical and astrological themes. Some theories want it to refer to magical and esoteric practices and probably to the possible union of man with plants. In this way, the plant elements of the real world are combined with the fictional and speculative.

To achieve precise, almost jewel-like cuts, an industrial laser cutting machine has been employed. The use of industrial machinery (which is used for factory production on a daily basis) to obtain unique and delicate objects is typical of the duo's work.

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The pieces received from the machine process are then assembled, shaped, bent and polished by hand. A noteworthy detail is burnouts appearing in some places on the steel surface, which resemble rust or organic sediment. They appear as a result of an intentional and - to some extent - controlled machine error.

**Ula Lucińska & Michał Knychaus (b. 1992 & 1987, Poland) live and work in Poznań.**

Both graduated from the department of New Media at the University of Arts in Poznań, Poland. They have recently exhibited at Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, eastcontemporary in Milan, Šopa Gallery, Košice, BSMNT Gallery in Leipzig, Aldea Gallery in Bergen, Lily Robert Gallery in Paris, Iskra Delta - The 34th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana. In the upcoming months they will have numerous group and solo presentations in Poland and abroad.

The exhibition was organized with the support of the Consulate General of Poland in Milan and Polish Institute in Rome.

