

Gerda Paliušytė
You Look at Me
14 June – 10 November, 2024
Jeu de Paume – Tours (Château de Tours, Tours)

Curator: Asta Vaičiulytė

Gerda Paliušytė's first exhibition in France, *You Look at Me*, presents two of her photographic series – *Guys* (since 2021) and *Blue Flowers* (since 2022), created and always shown as a unified work. Fragmented nude male bodies that almost blend into their surroundings are placed in distant dialogue with macro images of flowers, painted blue for a stronger aesthetic appeal. The forms and textures of these human and plant bodies blend eroticism and abstraction, flirting with the possibility of misrecognition, inviting and at the same time refusing proximity. Conventional genres – nudes and flowers – here are twisted and act as a decoy, questioning the canon of representation: feminine and masculine themes and objects of attention, their dependence on external socio-political circumstances, as well as tradition. In *Guys*, the relationship between the photographer and the photographed is left open, and instead of a voyeuristic contemplation nudity becomes part of an intimate presence together with the subject; while enlarged images of the *Blue Flowers* withhold the expectation of a macro-technique – their blurred colours and edges refuse a perfectly sharp look.

You Look at Me exposes one's gaze and makes one conscious of it. The single-channel video installation, enclosed in one of the exhibition rooms, physically embodies the limits of proximity explored in the photographic series. The desire for more and the disappointment of an unfulfilled promise are recurring subjects in this exhibition. The photographs do not deliver what one expects of the genre in the same way that an artificially-dyed flower fails to keep its fabricated colour – fading and turning white again, thus transforming itself. Instead of a fulfilment, the temporality and spectrality of these human and non-human bodies and our relationship to them are emphasised, inviting a gentler look at our coexistence.

The exhibition is organised by the Jeu de Paume, Paris and the Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, in collaboration with the City of Tours.

It is part of the Lithuanian season in France 2024, organized by the Lithuanian Culture Institute and the French Institute in Paris.

Images courtesy of Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius and Jeu de Paume, Paris.
Photos by Boris Camaca.