

Damir Očko *Special Feelings*

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Galerija Manuš is proud to present the exhibition *Special Feelings* by Damir Očko.

The pivot of the exhibition is Rudy, Očko's rude animatronic parrot, whose clever mechanism transforms toxic internet comments into short, fragmented phrases that resonate like nonsense verse, functioning as both a witty deconstruction and critical commentary on how the body and voice convey meaning, are coded and manipulated - a recurring theme in Očko's work.

Rudy is a therapeutic device of sorts for alleviating doomscrolling, trained to sift through and process the content the artist himself can no longer stomach, establishing a unique dynamic with collages from the *Dragforms* series - anagrams of specific phobias whose forms, visual fragments, and materials from unusual sources mutate into complex, multilayered meanings.

This same spirit is echoed in the *Spirits* series: vibrant and playful sculptural forms covered in makeup and glitter leftovers from queer parties bear recall the artist's personal experiences of togetherness, tenderness, and care. These fragile works are both intimate and universal; through them, as well as through *Dragforms*, the artist weaves a thread of connection with his community, broadening the sense of belonging beyond rigid boundaries.

In Očko's artistic process, shapes are transient, forms are in drag, voices refract, and boundaries become porous, allowing new, elusive spaces of freedom to emerge from what escapes strict structural definitions.

Damir Očko (born 1977, Zagreb) lives and works in Zagreb, where he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in 2003. His films, collages, *dragforms*, and installations have been showcased in solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Krems (Austria), Museo Nazionale Matera (Italy), the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Jeu de Paume in Paris, the National Gallery in Prague, the Museum of Contemporary Art Bordeaux, Museo Amparo in Mexico, DAZIBAO in Montreal, Künstlerhaus Halle für Kunst und Medien in Graz, Temple Bar Gallery and Studios in Dublin, Palais de Tokyo in Paris, as well as institutions such as Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and Kunstverein Leipzig.

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He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, including the 15th Havana Biennial, MUDAM in Luxembourg, FRAC le Plateau and FRAC des Pays de la Loire in France, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Kunsthalle Vienna, Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris, and the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw.

Očko represented Croatia at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) with his solo show *Studies on Shivering / The Third Degree*.

His works are included in numerous public and private collections, including FRAC le Plateau, Fondation Louis Vuitton, CNAP – Centre National des Arts Plastiques in Paris, MUDAM in Luxembourg, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, and Collection Lambert in Avignon.

List of works:

Homo Paid Bro / 100 x 150 cm / 2024 / Collage-mounted on archival cardboard gouache on paper, fabric, glitter, acrylic ink, gold leaf
note: Dromophobia- Fear of crossing streets. (selfportrait in drag)

Brouhaha Rib Opacity / 100 x 150 cm / 2024 / Collage-mounted on archival cardboard gouache on paper, fabric, glitter, gold leaf, acrylic ink
note: Arachibutyrophobia- Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth.

Ah Bait Goal Poke / 58 x 76 cm / 2022 / Collage gouache on paper, glitter, fabric, felt, spray paint, pressed confetti, chalk dust
note: Katagelophobia- Fear of ridicule. Ah Bait Goal Poke

Rudy / 2023 / Rude animatronic parrot, sequin, glitter, fabric, controller device, sensor, plinth and metal stand

Special Feelings / 2025 / Tea Room, Diva, Prom date, Avocet rose, Flamingo, Kiki dirt, Foxy, drawing, mummified fruit, makeup...