



# LAURIE MLODZIK

## *GENDER EXCRETIONS*

### MAR 11 - APR 10 2023

«Under this mask, another mask. I will never be finished removing all these faces.»<sup>1</sup>

Kaiserwache is delighted to present *GENDER EXCRETIONS* by Laurie Mlodzik, a solo exhibition taking on a site-specific approach and directly engaging with the institution of the public toilet. By situating their multi-layered works within KW, a former public bathroom, Mlodzik reflects on the ways in which gender is performed, regulated, and experienced in public spaces. The show opens on March 11, 2023 at 7pm.

Mlodzik's artistic practice encompasses a diverse range of mediums and approaches, reflecting their multidisciplinary background and interests. As an artist, dancer, and fermentationist, their practice is characterized by an interdisciplinary exploration of the body, social constructs, and personal experiences. Through their work they seek to challenge normative perceptions of the body and provoke critical conversations around identity, power dynamics, and social constructs.

In their presentation at KW, the artist explores the complex and fluid nature of gender identity constituted in the public sphere through an interrelated group of sculptures. By incorporating personal discarded items into these new works, Mlodzik ruminates the transformative and ongoing journey of their own gender identity.

From the narrow shaft that leads out of KW's basement emerges a latex soaked tube made from cotton fabric, as if slowly inching its way inside. A puddle-like mass of various materials spills onto the floor from the opening of the tube; its appearance reminiscent of an intestine flushing its contents, excreting what is devoid of nutrients. The figure of speech "to spill one's guts" may come to mind. Within the excretion, one can distinguish bleached textiles, dietary supplements (for weight loss and muscle building), lipstick, makeup, a perfume bottle and hair, all nonetheless coalescing into one flesh-colored (fair-skinned) entity covered in liquid latex and wax. The resulting amalgamation evokes at parts both bodily fluids and the appearance of flaying skin. Additional excretions can be found dispersed within one of the former bathroom stalls, suspended from a wall light, and obstructing a drain.

Through their choice of materials and the incorporation of personal items, Mlodzik's works evoke a sense of intimacy and vulnerability. The juxtaposition of these personal artifacts within the public toilet challenges established notions of privacy and social boundaries, positioning gender at an intermediary level, akin to skin, which serves as the conduit of exchange between our inner lives and the outer realm.

As excretions, the objects that could be associated with stereotypical femininity undergo a transformative process, transcending their conventional categorization. Presented in this raw primordial-soup-like state, these works underscore the dominant notion of gender characterized by a purportedly natural sex binary as being an inherently unstable social construct. The act of discarding and repurposing these objects also seems to suggest a reclaiming of personal agency in defining one's gender.

Occupying the main room is a work consisting of a sizeable handmade paper hanging from a towel rack installed on the ceiling. Mlodzik's notes and drawings served as the base for the production of the paper. Additionally, ginger root peels, a byproduct of their fermentation practice - of which the resulting ginger beer can be purchased at the nearby Kunstverein Freiburg - and strands of their own hair are incorporated into the paper. The resulting sculpture combines the artist's material production, their daily practices and bodily experiences into a demonstration of the cyclical nature of ingestion and excretion.

The term "excretion" typically refers to the process of eliminating waste or unwanted substances from the body. In the context of gender, it suggests a shedding or externalization of elements associated with gender identity. By employing this provocative title, the exhibition invites viewers to contemplate what it means for gender to excrete or release certain aspects, whether those are societal expectations, norms, or personal expressions. Moreover, the title GENDER EXCRETIONS prompts us to question the notion of waste itself. What is considered waste in the context of gender?

<sup>1</sup> Claude Cahun, Aveux non avendus (Disavowals), 1930

#### About the Artist:

Laurie Mlodzik (b. 1994 in Heidelberg) resides and works in Basel. In 2021, they completed their MA in Fine Arts at Institute Art Gender Nature in Basel, following their BA at Hochschule für Kunst, Design und Populäre Musik Freiburg and their earlier studies in dance at the Isadora Duncan International Institute in New York.

Mlodzik participated in numerous group exhibitions including at such venues as: Pförtnerhaus, Freiburg (2016); Garage L6, Freiburg (2018); Kunstverein Freiburg (2018), Black Forest Institute of Art, Lenzkirch (2020); Pilz Welle Lust, Basel (2020/2021); Kunsthaus Baselland (2021). They are currently a co-host of the fermentation collective fffff and perform regularly with the Isadora Duncan dance company.

#### About Kaiserwache:

The former public restroom, known to Freiburg residents as "Kaiserwache," was well-frequented due to its central location in the city and proximity to the banks of the Dreisam. However, with its original purpose decommissioned, the question of finding an alternative use for the heritage-protected building has arisen. This question has become increasingly relevant, especially given the growing lack of space in Freiburg, despite many buildings remaining vacant. With this in mind, KW positions itself as an offspace that is concerned with its own temporality, interested in suggesting alternatives beyond its interim use. The space at KW acts as a catalyst for the presentation of site-specific works and the facilitation of discourse surrounding the institution of the public toilet. By showcasing site-specific works, KW offers a unique platform for artists to reflect on and engage with the space's heritage and temporality.

Curated by Christina Sperling, Rahel Zahlten, Marco Spitz and Ilja Zaharov.

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