

Franco Bifo Berardi called us the “smooth generation”, one that does not tolerate armpit or pubic hair. Rather, we need “perfect compatibility in order to interface corporeal surfaces in connection.” With smoothness brings the illusion of closeness; the interface becomes the body, the body becomes the interface.

For her first solo exhibition at Rodolphe Janssen, Sascha Braunig will present a new series of paintings that insinuate themselves with a seductive smoothness, even as their subjects attempt to overwhelm the picture plane. Skinned and splayed, reduced to lithe metallic forms, Braunig’s figures slip between folds and take their form from globular bacteria. They consume and infect their given space, insisting on objecthood over the entrapment of a glossy surface.

Several of Braunig’s vertical, attenuated figures—such as in *La Maitresse*—appear to be tied, pinned or directly stretched onto the frame that contains them. Apparently immobilized in this way, their rasterized bodies nevertheless threaten to trespass into the viewer’s three-dimensional world.

Curiously, Braunig paints from clay sculptures she constructs alongside her canvases—the shadows that offer corporeal weight to her figures are meticulously rendered from life. Seemingly anachronistic, this painting process lends her works a rare hapticality, unveiling all-too-real details (like the awkward shadow a pin casts as it pierces a cut-out dress in *Rebecca*) even when blended with invented and impossible moments.

But Braunig’s models also subtly operate within a uniquely feminine space, one long occupied by the female muses—often artists themselves—of male-dominated avant garde painting. The unforgiving relationship between artist and subject, subject and object is at once softened and empowered as Braunig plays within this seedy zone of the male grotesque—breaking its spell through the legerdemain of her surreal fragmentation.

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