

Dürst Britt & Mayhew

Exhibition title: Lobster and shrimp on my plate, I need my pockets so fat they inflate (Vol. 4: Back of the Kitchen)

Artists: Robin Phoenix Whitehouse & Todor Rabadzhiyski

Venue: Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague, The Netherlands

Date: 2 May - 21 June 2026

Photography: Gert Jan van Rooij / copyright the artists & Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague

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"Lobster and shrimp on my plate, I need my pockets so fat they inflate" is a collaborative project by artists **Robin Phoenix Whitehouse (UK)** and **Todor Rabadzhiyski (BG)** that started in 2021 and delves into the culture and changing economy associated with lobsters.

In the fourth showcase (Vol. 4: Back of the Kitchen) of their ongoing project the artists look specifically at the moment the lobster enters the restaurant kitchen, tracing the transformation of a sea creature into a symbol of status and celebration. Thereto they have transformed the Frontspace of the gallery into the back of a kitchen, framed from the artists' own roles during spells of time working at *Bistro-mer*, a renowned seafood restaurant in The Hague.

In the kitchen, the lobster loses all dignity; there, the lobster is not a symbol, but a product. It is chilled, moved, prepared. These actions are repetitive and often invisible. They form the basis of a system in which the end product takes centre stage. Of course, before the lobster becomes a status symbol, it must first be killed. The artists don't shy away from this reality, nor do they sensationalise it. The violence is simply part of the system, one that's mirrored in the art world, where ideas are dissected, repurposed, and served up as something else entirely.

The artists' choice of materials follows the same logic. Each material carries its own history and its own value system. Porcelain refers to tradition and fragility, aluminium to industry and reproducibility and marble to durability and canonization. By for example realising the same mold of a single lobster in different materials, it becomes visible how value shifts. And how quickly something is suddenly called "timeless." It is not an aesthetic choice, but an analytical one. What changes when an object changes material? What remains the same? And how does that relate to the way we look at art?

Much like how, in a restaurant, different hands work on one and the same dish the paintings in the exhibition are composed of elements created separately by the artists. The drawings on the lids of empty oyster boxes, were created during restaurant working hours and contain personal notes on the reverse side, often remarking on the long hours and labour involved.

The first three iterations of the project were respectively shown at Laak Club, The Hague in 2021 (Vol. 1: The Catch); TRIXIE artist-run space, The Hague in 2022 (Vol. 2: The Market); and Swimming Pool, Sofia, Bulgaria in 2024 (Vol. 3: Transportation). For the realisation of this fourth iteration of the project we would like to thank restaurant *Bistro-mer* and *Visafslag* Scheveningen for their kind collaboration.

Robin Phoenix Whitehouse (2000) is a British-born artist, living and working in The Hague. He obtained a BFA from the Royal Academy of Art The Hague in 2023. His practice is rooted to the environments he inhabits, the projects are durational, taking place over multiple years and routed within specific contexts; public space, art history and archeological discourse. As opposed to a studio based practice, the works' creation tends to involve a direct interaction with a place or audience, be that meetings, happenings or facilitating. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Destroyed and Unearthed' at Abguss-Sammlung Antiker Plastik in Berlin and 'Verhalenkabinet' at the Allard Pierson Museum of Antiquity in Amsterdam. Recent group exhibitions include 'Grootste Hits Aller Tijden' at Studio Pompstraat in Rotterdam and 'Peas and Carrots' at NEST in The Hague.

Todor Rabadzhiyski (1999) is a Bulgarian-born artist, living and working in The Hague. He obtained a BFA from the Royal Academy of Art The Hague in 2022. His work explores how political, economic, and ecological systems leave traces in matter, landscapes, and bodies. He approaches materials as active agents shaped by time, pressure, corrosion, and exposure, allowing transformation to become integral to the work. Rather than producing fixed objects, he constructs situations that unfold over time, where meaning emerges through duration and interaction. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Raw Perspectives' at +359 Gallery and 'Galvanized' at Punta Gallery & Posta Space, both in Sofia. Recent group exhibitions include 'View with a Room' at Punta Gallery, Rosa Luxembourg Platz, Berlin and 'Defy the Status Quo' at Aether Haga in The Hague.

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