

Press Release

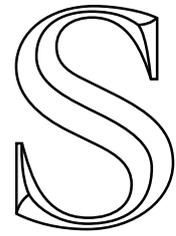
BODY SPLITS

Nina Beier, Morgan Courtois, Jesse Darling, Cathy Josefowitz, Judith Kakon, Oliver Laric, Kris Lemsalu, Julie Monot, Pakui Hardware, Puppies Puppies, Mia Sanchez, Dorian Sari, Diamond Stingily

Curated by Samuel Leuenberger and Elise Lammer, assisted by Simon Würsten Marin

14 June – 24 August 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday 13 June, 6–10pm



SALTS

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To celebrate its tenth anniversary, SALTS is proud to present the work of thirteen artists in an exhibition that invites the public to think about the body in new ways. For a long time, artists have challenged the traditional image of the body, both as subject and object, to explore and reflect upon identity. In recent years, we have been witnessing a shift in the representation of the body in artistic practices, supported, among other by a resurgence of figuration in painting, sculpture and other media. This is visible among a generation of artists who approach the body—sometimes dismembered, distorted, augmented, remodelled, absent— as a way to explore questions both personal and political.

(Floor plan on the last page)

NINA BEIER – Rooms 1, 2 & Garden

Danish artist Nina Beier often works with industrially-made objects, whose production, circulation and use-value are questioned by means of subtle alterations and unexpected recontextualization. *Baby*, 2019 is a series of outdoor sculptures made with waterbeds that the artist scattered in SALTS garden and outdoor space. Initially the artist's curiosity for the mattresses was triggered by a youtube ad in which a heavy vehicle drives over the indestructible water-filled structures. The violence of the test inevitably prompts a discomforting feeling. Exhibiting the hole through which they were once fed water, coins and pebbles, the structures show similarities to a gigantic and nurturing belly. *Plug*, 2018 displays three domestic sinks hung at unusual height across the exhibition spaces. Originally designed to be viewed from above, here their usually unseen bottoms reveal sculptural properties reminiscent of inner organs. Each is plugged with a custom-made cigar further pointing to oral, anal and sexual connotations. Cigars, just like waterbeds are both goods that once were considered markers of wealth and status, and rare objects onto which Westerner desire could be projected.

MORGAN COURTOIS – Rooms 1 & 4

Morgan Courtois's large scale plaster busts seem to emerge from a 19th century Parisian studio. Especially produced for SALTS, the heads are decorated with lavish hats, textiles and decor, vases with flowers surround the portraits as they sit on low tables. The works speak to the senses and the sensual. Courtois' recent work has moved away from abstraction and into larger-than-life figuration embracing the figurative and decorative. His figures often lay on sofas, or sit on a rock, taking on an almost classical stoic pose while simultaneously appearing disengaged. An antihero to the athletic model, his figures are camp and slender. It is no wonder that Courtois's erotically charged nudes draw inspiration from a range of art historical masters of the Italian and French Renaissance. Interested in botany, textiles, and the symbolism of flowers, Courtois uses these elements to adorn his portraits, and in doing so enhances their inherent energy. Courtois feeds his bodies with visual cues taken from his own collection of photographs and photos taken from the internet, inspiration from books and drawings creating a strong sense of longing.

JESSE DARLING – Rooms 1 & 2

The body is omnipresent in Jesse Darling's work. However, that body never appears fully sovereign or as a sanctuary. Rather, what is made visible is a body affected by violence, illness and pain. It is the body as a battlefield, and simultaneously as a motor of resilience. Both in their sculptural and bi-dimensional objects, the artist addresses the limitations encountered by individuals whose body is generating hindrances or being the target of physical, racial, sexual or gender-related violence. Often, this body is not even visible; rather, it is present in negative, sometimes like a trace, other times like a hint, triggering a form of pareidolia in the viewer.

The result are artworks that are fragmented, crooked or inaccessible: Icarus bears the standard presents a crutch hung as a flagpole with a pillow strangled in a leather harness and hanging straps. The aesthetics of the sculpture contrasts with the title's celebration of the antique character's heroism: this work—which Jesse Darling called “a kind of partial self-portrait”—appears like a comment on ableism, illustrating the burden that disabilities may cause, but also the necessity to fight for one's visibility. A Correspondence addresses the motive of communications by means of an unreadable letter written by the artist over the course of a physically and emotionally demanding process, of which only the imperfect signs are a trace.

CATHY JOSEFOWITZ – Room 1

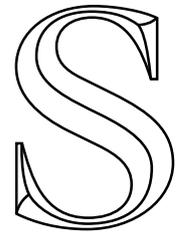
Born in New York in 1956 Cathy Josefowitz was an artist trained as a painter, but also as a performer and choreographer. Among others, she worked with Mary Fulkerson, one of the founders of the “anatomical release technique”, a holistic method which emphasised the mutual influence of the mind and the body in devising movement. Most notably, she also studied with Steve Paxton, one of the founders of the Judson Dance Theater with Trisha Brown in the 1960s. Josefowitz's thorough knowledge of performance always played a significant role in her paintings and drawings, with the artist translating notions of time and space onto canvas and paper. In the late 1970s Cathy Josefowitz produced in notebooks a series of portraits and self-portraits with pastel. Having from an early age struggled with the image of her own body, Josefowitz's paintings and drawings were often ‘performed’ as substitutes to dance, the medium potentially granting the most freedom, according to the artist. Like a ‘conceptual’ outlet, drawing allowed the artist to play with bodies free of any physical and psychological hindrance. Deeply symbolic, the series on display at SALTS shows human bodies whose disconnected and entangled limbs make them dysfunctional, yet their expressive positions also translate a state of emotional conflict.

JUDITH KAKON – Garden

Judith Kakon created a new body of work specifically for SALTS. A series of vertical structures, made of industrial PVC plumbing tubes stand erect and tall at the center plaza of the space. At the top of each tube, a light bulb encrusts their heads, while the cables run through their bodies and exit out from one of their pre-drilled holes towards the floor. Resembling enlarged candles from a catholic procession, the candelabra-like objects are tied together in various constellations, standing tall and short, fat and narrow. Throughout Kakon's installation, one finds the politics of public space a central theme, where national or cultural identity is discussed via the power structures of display architecture. One senses this in the digestive connotations of the plumbing components turned into street lamps, turned into groups of solitary figures. Scott Roben, painter, writer and friend of Kakon eloquently describes her work as follows: “There is a silent quality to Kakon's work that stems not from the absence of language but from the work's engagement with modes of experience that are often pre-verbal: appetite, sexuality, digestion, prayer, architecture. Operating from this place, her works manage to fluidly traverse contradictory networks of social laws, image systems, and memory that we unconsciously inhabit and are inhabited by – and to uncover perversities in the silences.”

OLIVER LARIC – Room 5 & Garden

Oliver Laric's work is characterised by a deep research and appropriation of history, art history and popular culture as he sources, collects and scans material that become new subject matter. Laric sheds light behind the very structures that define our understanding of authorship and authenticity, questioning the very fabric of the objects around us and thus our belief system. For SALTS he is presenting two recent works, a work entitled *Hundemensch*, a transparent polyurethane sculpture which shows a humanoid figure merging with a dog shape. Its translucent body absorbs the earth beneath and reflects back out the colours like a prism. In the video work, *Betweenness*, a black & white vectorized animation is showing a continuous sequence of mutating forms that oscillate between figuration and abstraction. An endless amount of source material, taken from anime, nature and science documentaries, or people morphing into animals, entangle ideas and shapes in an everlasting process of becoming. All images have been vectorized and the infinitely shifting lines continually move between sequences. The work is overlaid with a mesmerizing soundtrack composed by Ville Haimala of Amnesia Scanner that accompanies the animation, itself weaving into the unfolding narrative. ‘The resulting artwork is suggestive of instability, metamorphosis, a liberating flexibility and the power of multiplicity’.



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KRIS LEMSALU – Room 6

In iconography, the figure of the Pietà embodies sorrow and compassion. It is an incredibly powerful allegory of an unconditional selfless love that reaches far beyond Christian liturgy. The contemplation of this image triggers an interplay of identification with the characters of the composition that fully integrate the viewer's emotional response. The grief and tenderness of the Virgin Mary towards her son is echoed in the public's feeling of empathy for the mourning mother. Who is the child, who is the motherly figure, in front of this son that is simultaneously a mythological father? *With Mysteriously conceived and deeply felt*, Kris Lemsalu invites the public to a profound exploration of this canonical imagery, less in the religious sense than in the universal emotions that it conveys. The sculpture is displayed in an environment that reinforces the intimacy of the experience: the lullaby, the discrete lighting as well as the narrowness of the space are as many elements that participate in the construction of the sacredness of the experience. The feet—cast of her mother's—and washing buckets hint at the humility of the scene, the white roses stand for purity, the blanket—her grandfather's—for care, and the coins—which viewers can throw in the buckets to make a wish—call for superstition and an individual emotional commitment with the piece.

JULIE MONOT – Room 1

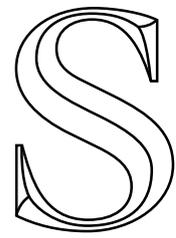
Julie Monot is interested in the ritualistic potential of sculpture and its relationship to performance and theater. She often draws inspiration from popular myths and figures, without chronological hierarchy, in order to let emerge what could be understood as a universal narrative. When she was young Monot was told that the carpet she liked to lie on was actually a breeding ground for microscopic creatures of all kinds. Like many kids, this arguably was her first encounter with the idea of invisible life. This memory led her to look into single-celled organisms, and she became interested in how the evolution of unicellular life marked a crucial turn in the evolution of life on Earth. *Before it was Water* is a hand-tufted kimono with motifs inspired on various types of single-cell organisms. Folded on a metal bar hanging from the ceiling, the work is worn during the opening reception of the exhibition by a performer. This short incarnation, like in many other of Monot's works, bridges her work with sculpture to a more performative and time-based practice. Kimonos are interesting garments for the artist insofar as they provide vast surfaces whose shape remains unchanged, regardless of the body shape, the age and the gender of the person who is wearing it.

PAKUI HARDWARE – Room 3

For artist duo Pakui Hardware (Neringa Černiauskaitė and Ugnius Gelguda), metabolism is not only an organic process, it is also a metaphor for the way life is being consumed by an exploitative system, or what they call a “never ending economy of the body.” Reminiscent of an anatomical subject, their installation is hanging open, dissected, with visible guts and bowels. More precisely, this metaphoric body alludes to a failing digestive system, thus making clear that this economy is more one of consumption and disposal than of reciprocal subsistence and seems to contemplate the contemporary manifestation of what some have named a “necropolitical” reality. This evocated corpse exceeds the seemingly tangible line between the organic and synthetic, natural and anthropogenic realms. It is not even a mere—yet operational—machine anymore. It is reduced to the most basic signifiers of a system that has been made dependent on another. Simultaneously, it also makes visible a certain fascination for the limitless potential of a technology allowing to access and alter the most tiny, complex and remote constituents of a metabolism. But the fragility of the components and the state of suspension of the structure are a warning as well: they seem to remind of the risks inherent to the ever ambitious race for a posthuman utopia that may forget that bodies are not only objects, but also subjects of a system.

PUPPIES PUPPIES – Throughout the exhibition spaces and garden

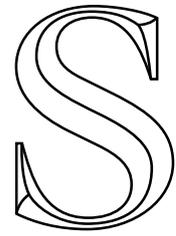
“Hi Simon. No problem it's been a pleasure figuring out the best scenario. Grave measurements: 91 cm wide, 243 cm in length, 182 cm in depth. This is the standard size in the United States from what I can tell. [...] Ok totally understand about the toi toi. Thank you for looking into a cabin though [...] but the alternative you sent is not bad at all! [...] The mound of dirt from the grave will be quite nice. [...] To begin the exhibition I was thinking each of us selects three meals for the plated portion. Mine would be waffles, an omelet with salad, and a bowl of ramen [...]. This way the food is less a self portrait and more of a combined effort in which the results are out of my control [...] Excited about this. 'Decomposed still life' is nice. It feels like the basics of life to me. A redundancy of existing. Like Jeanne Dielman kneading the meat in Chantal Ackerman's Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussel. A banality of existing but also choices as portraits. Or lack thereof. Best! Jade”



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MIA SANCHEZ – Rooms 2 & 3

Mia Sanchez's approach inquires ways of contemporary storytelling that often uses language as a starting point, and as a tool for thinking identity or binding identity into communities. Currently the artist is working around the topic of detective stories. Her initial interest in that genre came with the question of how and in what territory one does one move. Traditionally detective stories or crime fiction have used fiction to establish a specific social or political model, one that would often reinforce the dominant power structure. On the other hand, what is particular about this genre is that it requires from the reader to take an active stance and to simultaneously identify with several characters in order to reach the omniscient knowledge leading to the solution. Similarly, in line with conceptual art, the participation of the viewer is required to complete Sanchez's work. Borrowing the aesthetic of advertising, the HD black and white photo of *Kitchen Stories* display pristine kitchenware that alludes to a familiar "crime" and domestic scene: the kitchen. The clues take the form of a cut and paste note listing basic rules of writing detective fiction. *Figure Studies I & II* combine what looks like evidence from crime scenes, with typewritten quotes by the artist describing characters. Without specifying the relationship between the two, the polysemic play between imagery and text requires the viewer's own experience to finalise the plot.



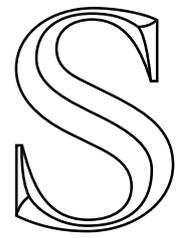
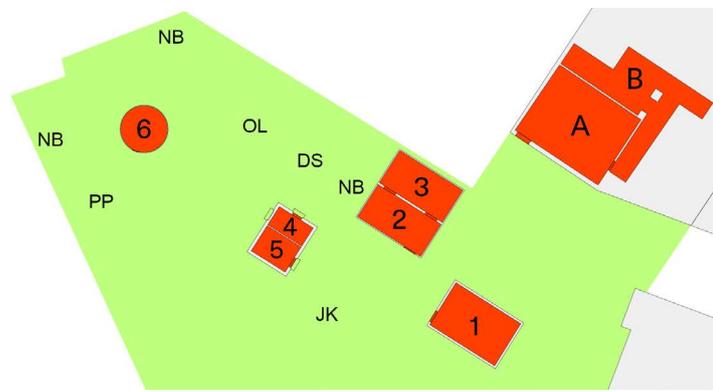
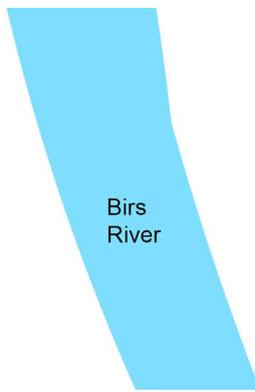
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DORIAN SARI – Garden

In his practice, Dorian Sari is interested in the narrative elements that connect the individual's own agency and perception with the collective body through culture, history or mythology. For *BODY SPLITS* he is presenting a site-specific installation piece that draws its inspiration from the early telecommunication technologies, thus interpreting the exhibition's title from a metaphorical perspective. From the late nineteenth century and until the development of underground cables and central lines, the telephone service necessitated that each device be connected with its own cable, thus massively affecting the urban landscape with cities' skies becoming rapidly saturated with thousands of phone lines. In the middle of the garden in SALTS, Dorian Sari erected a telephone pole and used four kilometers of cable to create an architecture that physically connects the different spaces through which the exhibition is scattered. While functioning as tangible marker in the garden and a formal unifier for the whole exhibition, the project simultaneously alludes to the early stages of live remote communication which radically restructured the social body over the past centuries and questions the way in which collectivity can be built and made visible in a time of dematerialized contacts.

DIAMOND STINGILY – Rooms 1, 2 & 3

Diamond Stingily is an American poet and artist who often uses readymades to create installations dealing with personal and shared memories, also addressing what it means to live as a black woman in a suburban environment and being constantly exposed to racial discrimination and violence. For SALTS, she is presenting a group of small puppets. They sit scattered on the floor, leaning against the walls of the galleries, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups. Their colourful bodies, their single or double heads conjure emotions between playfulness and sacredness. The artist writes: "The Hergott dolls are made for the unborn children of [_____]. The colors represent what the child's or children's aunts want for their future. When there is a larger doll it means the child or children has multiple aunts who made one large doll and decided on the colors together. A two headed doll usually indicates two personality traits similar to what people think of Geminis (The [_____] follow a different zodiac) or if the mother is expecting twins. Even if the [_____] children decide to leave the community and join the Western world they will carry their doll for life or it will be held in a family member's home for safe keeping. No one is shunned from this community. The doll is given to the child or children after 4 months of life. The [_____] language consist of Spanish, English, German, Portuguese, French and Swahilli. Non [_____] speakers say it is nearly impossible to translate to the languages [_____] was based off of. The Hergott doll is one of the few objects the Western world have of the [_____] people."



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ROOM 1 (from left to right)

Jesse Darling
Icarus bears the standard, 2018
 Flag bracket, mobility crutch,
 feather pillow, pack straps,
 strap-on harness, dog harness, steel
 228 x 38 x 118 cm

Diamond Stingily
Hergott, 2018
 Cotton, stuffing
 Dimension variable

Morgan Courtois
Spring Figure (4), 2019
 Plaster, steel, fabrics, porcelain,
 polyester, flowers and mixed media
 170 x 80 x 60 cm

Morgan Courtois
Spring Figure (5), 2019
 Plaster, steel, fabrics, porcelain, polyester,
 flowers and mixed media
 160 x 80 x 50 cm

Nina Beier
Plug, 2018 (2x)
 Ceramic sink, hand rolled cigar
 Dimension variable

Julie Monot
Before it was water, 2019
 Wool, cotton, synthetic latex,
 activated through a performance on the
 opening night
 300 x 144 cm (open)

Cathy Josefowitz
Sans titre, 1980
 Pastel on paper
 19.5 x 15.5 cm

Cathy Josefowitz
Sans titre, 1979
 Pastel on paper
 19.5 x 15.5 cm

Cathy Josefowitz
Sans titre, 1979
 Pastel on paper
 21.5 x 17.5 cm

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Sans titre, 1979
 Pastel on paper
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 19.5 x 15.5 cm

Cathy Josefowitz
Sans titre, 1980
 Pastel on paper
 19.5 x 15.5 cm

Cathy Josefowitz
Sans titre, 1979
 Pastel on paper
 21,5 x 17,5 cm

ROOM 2 (from left to right)

Jesse Darling
A Correspondence, 2018
 Pen and ink on white diffusion filter, frame
 136 x 262 cm

Puppies Puppies
Eating(Choices)(Simon,Elise,Samuel,Jade), 2019
 Paella in a box, Glass stein of beer
 Dimensions variable

Diamond Stingily
Hergott, 2018
 Cotton, stuffing
 Dimensions variable

Mia Sanchez
Kitchen Stories, 2019
 Print on backlight foil, wooden frame, LED
 strips, plexiglass, wire
 70 x 100 cm

Nina Beier
Plug, 2018
 Ceramic sink, hand rolled cigar
 Dimensions variable

ROOM 3 (from left to right)

Mia Sanchez
Figure Studies I, 2019
Print on backlight foil, wooden frame, LED strips, plexiglass, wire
70 x 100 cm

Mia Sanchez
Figure Studies II, 2019
Print on backlight foil, wooden frame, LED strips, plexiglass, wire
70 x 100 cm

Pakui Hardware
The Return of Sweetness, 2018
Heat-treated PVC, latex, textiles, glass, silicone, chia seeds, sea-urchin spikes
300 x 50 x 22 cm

Diamond Stingily
Hergott, 2018
Cotton, stuffing
Dimensions variable

Puppies Puppies
Eating(Choices)(Simon,Elise,Samuel,Jade), 2019
Large container of yogurt, glass of red wine
Dimensions variable

ROOM 4

Spring Figure (6), 2019
Plaster, fabrics, porcelain, flowers and mixed media
70 x 100 x 80 cm

Puppies Puppies
Eating(Choices)(Simon,Elise,Samuel,Jade), 2019
Dehydrated noodle soup
Dimensions variable

ROOM 5

Oliver Laric
Betweenness, 2018
Video installation, sound,
4'36"

ROOM 6

Kris Lemsalu
Mysteriously conceived and deeply felt, 2018
Porcelain, textiles, metal, coins, roses, water, sound
136 x 134 x 70 cm

Nina Beier
Baby, 2018 (3x)
Waterbed, water, pebbles, coins
Dimensions variable

GARDEN

Judith Kakon
A sempahore or maybe just an accident (with bins), 2019
PVC tube, styrofoam, expanding foam, filler, light bulb, lamp holder, cables
Dimensions variable

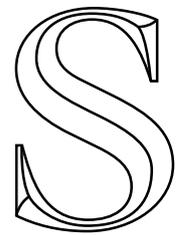
Oliver Laric
Hundemensch, 2018
Polyurethane
53 x 52 x 58 cm

Dorian Sari
Together, 2018
Wood, paint, polypropylen cable
Dimensions variable

Puppies Puppies
Eating(Choices)(Simon,Elise,Samuel,Jade), 2019
Bottle and cup of champagne, Falafel wrap in aluminium, KitKat, Glass of orange juice, Bowl of ramen, Cup of coffee, Pizza to go, Omelet with salad on a plate, Waffles, Can of Coca Cola, Bag of chips, Studentenfutter
Dimensions variable

Puppies Puppies
Grave (Hole), 2019
Grave hole, soil
243 x 91 x 182 cm

Puppies Puppies
Shit and Piss, 2019
Portable toilet with toilet paper
40 x 40 x 35 cm



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