



Vernissage: May 25, 7 - 10 PM

Exhibition: May 26 - June 24, Wed - Fri, 3 - 7 PM

Performance by Marko Marković: May 25, 8 PM

"Open Mic" hosted by ZIMT: June 2, 6 PM

Installation "(un)telling pleasure" by puro conjuro (part I): June 8, 5 - 8 PM

Screening of a short film "AUTOAGGRESSION" by Martin Willibal: June 9, 8 PM

Installation "(un)telling pleasure" by puro conjuro (part II): June 24, 7 - 10 PM

Art proved to be an essential tool to draw attention to social and environmental issues throughout history. After speaking about the general shame surrounding the symptoms of mental disorders, for this year's Mental Health Awareness Month, we are using contemporary art to discuss the role of mental health within the context of sexual pleasure. With the persevering stigma and lack of sex education, we need every opportunity and medium to open up a discussion on these topics, particularly their interconnectedness.

Nine artists selected via open call brought up topics that uncovered still only a fragment of what prevents us from enjoying our bodies in an individually truthful way. The previous century's sexual revolution, while liberating a few, didn't erase deeply rooted systemic issues. Not only a very few of us were taught to seek pleasure and embrace it in a unique way, many of us question how deserving of feeling it we are in the first place. This high level of lack of self-worth is particularly present in the abuse survivors — a theme that the exhibition's focus opened up inevitably. Whether dealing with the consequences of another's attack or the almost invisible phenomenon of auto aggression, it all comes down to the fact that *no one is experiencing violence for the first time when causing it.*<sup>[1]</sup>

Presented artworks can then be perceived as witnesses to the harm done to our collective self, proving once again that mental health is societal health. They remind us that we still live in a patriarchal society where desperate women seek misogynistic and scientifically inaccurate procedures of hymen reconstruction to avoid everything from feelings of shame to physical death and where men are the ones deciding abortion rights. Even in a democratic country with relative access to the procedure, fear of unwanted pregnancy can strongly affect mental health and erase the pleasure from intercourse. While these struggles disproportionately concern women, body-image issues affect everyone regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Combined with a religious glorification of suffering, sexual stigma, generally present homophobia, transphobia, racism, a lack of diversity and natural bodies in popular culture, along with media (mis)representation of mental disorders — the context-dependent pleasure can be almost impossible to achieve for many.

The project *Hast du lust?* invites us to look at social phenomena from a different perspective, to recognize neglected parts of ourselves mirrored in another's intimate story but also to contemplate the role of a bystander — responsibility and the consequences of being the one who watches.

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[1] Rozpustilý\*í: Káťa Kortus a Ela Plíhalová: "Snění o abolicionistickém feminizmu" in Kapitál 04/2022 (translated from Czech original into English by the author).

## JURY

**Anastasia Kuznetsova** is a co-founder and creative director of the Made of Millions Foundation, overseeing all creative produced by MMF. Anastasia has been involved in the organization since its inception in 2016. Her bold design work differentiated the platform from other mental health outlets and provided sufferers with a digital experience that mirrored the intensity of OCD. In 2017, she led the redesign of the website, which took home a handful of awards, including a Mediapost OMMA, Webby Honoree and Communicator Gold. In 2018, Anastasia designed MadeofMillions.com, as a digital meeting ground for the mental health community.

Instagram: @ak\_\_\_nyc, @madeofmillions

**Jana Reininger** is a sociologist, journalist, photographer and co-founder of ZIMT magazine. She has won journalism awards for her work about mental health and social (in)equality. At the University of Vienna, she researches refugee housing and intersectionality.

Website: [www.janareininger.com](http://www.janareininger.com)

Instagram: @janarng, @zimtmagazin

**aaron nora scherer** is a social worker, s3x worker, body worker and multidisciplinary artist from germany currently living in vienna. aarons interactive, immersive and durational performance works create situations that allow them to explore social dynamics, contemporary forms of communication and intimacy. installation, sculpture and sound is the media that nora is focusing on in their current practice.

Website: [noraaaronscherer.com](http://noraaaronscherer.com)

Instagram: @futuredaddy

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# Exhibition

Vernissage and performance by Marko Marković: May 25, 7-10 PM

Exhibition: May 26 - June 24, Wed - Fri, 3 - 7 PM

Improper Walls, Reindorf-gasse 42, 1150 Vienna

## Artists:

Agrina Vllasaliu

Daniel Hill

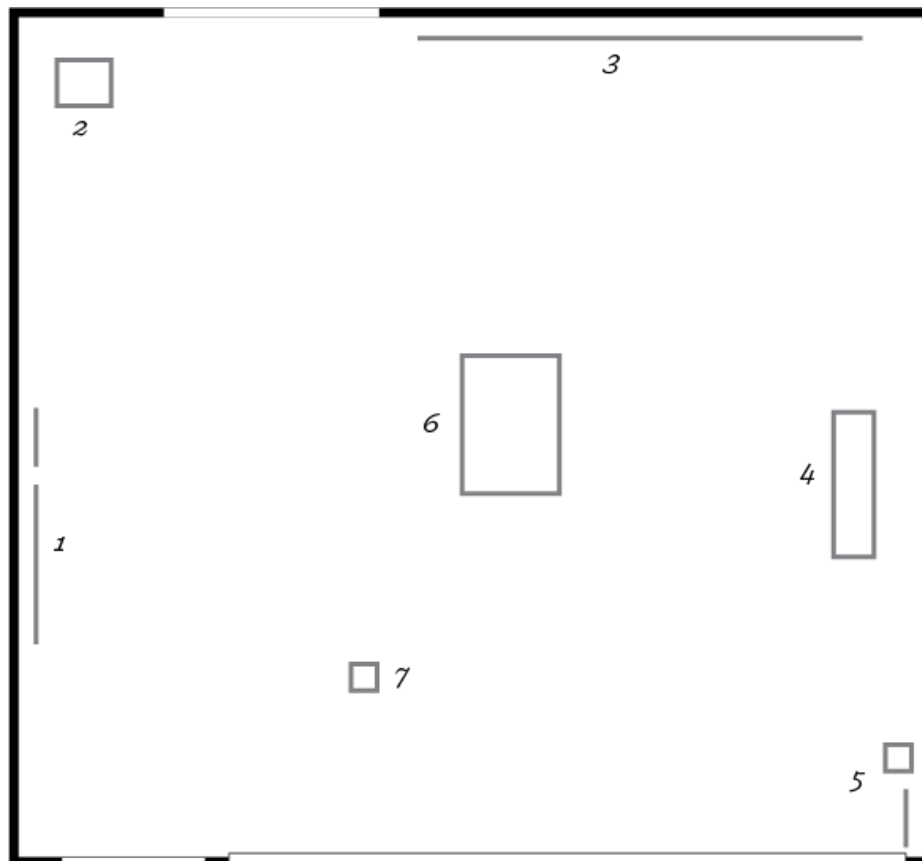
Linda Bergstötter

Margrit Barner

Marko Marković

Merybell Nabilah Reynoso

Michael Robert Jimenez



# 1 no title 1

Marker on 100 x 70 cm  
2022

## no title 2

Ink on A3  
2021

In her drawings, Linda Bergstötter deals with gender roles, social (in)equality and taboos regarding the female anatomy and bodily functions. As a "female matter" menstruation, pregnancy and birth are seen as "natural processes", so e.g. little medical research is done on these topics. Women are expected to take on the burden and risks of contraception, reproduction and upbringing. The figures in Linda's drawings express the massive personal, physical and social implications of pregnancy and childbirth, the position of mothers in society, and the fear of becoming unintentionally pregnant and having only so few options. For women, the freedom of heterosexual sexuality is restricted. Through her sensitive drawings, she wants to encourage conversation and question the systemic oppression of women and female autonomy, as the laws in countries around the world are tightening the basic human rights of women.

### Linda Bergstötter

1997 born in Vienna, Austria.

(Janaina C.) Linda Bergstötter studies graphics and printmaking under Jan Svenungsson and fashion under Grace Wales Bonner at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. She works as a multidisciplinary artist in Vienna.

Instagram: @lindalinderlindes

# 2 Jaula de Oro

Sculpture  
Mexico City  
2022

This piece portrays the paradox experienced by a person with a mental health condition; the body is both a gilded cage and a source of sexual liberation. Influenced by Dadaism, this piece does not aim to be aesthetically pleasing; rather, it does not fixate or dwell on whether or not the viewer will find it to be. The artist reflects on (dis)embodiment, and depersonalization, while also honouring other bodies *from diverse galaxies*.

**Merybell Nabilah Reynoso** Merybell (she/hers) is an anthropologist, artist, writer, human rights activist and mental health advocate from the Dominican Republic. Her work currently explores fat and queer Caribbean pleasure, bodies, mental illness, neurosis, ARTivism, the paradox of non-places, the Cosmos, and is influenced by many artists, which include Sarah Lucas, Augusta Savage, and Fernando Botero. She is based in Mexico City and works in the Human Rights sector. Instagram: @mblkingbear, @paquitaceramica

# 3 KEINE BLUMMEN ESSEN

## Southeast sadness in Central Europe

*Performance, video, 8:41"*  
*Video credits Zorica Gojkov*  
2021

Displaced from its natural environment and re-located to uncertainties of the unknown landscape, self-determination extracts survival instinct as a shared experience of entities coexisting in extreme living conditions. Performance determines the position of trying to exist in different places at the same time as in parallel worlds melting in the space of socio-political relations and far end intimacy, hidden, unspoken, and invisible dissimulations. Colliding these worlds together, the psycho-physical transformations opens in the transit between thoughts, memories, bodies, reality, and imagination, changing the perception and experience of what identity is or what it can become.

When eating flowers in performances, Marko Marković explores changes in perception by bringing the body and mind into a state of intoxication with flower enzymes—importing the substance of flowers in body organism and fusing one system within another by performing the embodiment of natural and artificial environment. Performing body is changing, shivering, cramping, the facial expressions are transforming, choking, exhausted from the process trying to adapt the encountered situation.

Flower, a complex symbiotic living system with its purpose and particular place in nature, being cut, dislocated, and repurposed for the esthetical satisfaction, symbolism of devotion and power manifestation, planted and served to be consumed as romanticized beauty pre deterrent for its very own sabotage.

Video of eating flowers performance under the title "Don't eat flowers" determines the individual position in social, political, intimate and identity-related topics according to experience towards the environment and living conditions of war and post-war periods.

Performance starts gentile, poetic and romantic, then during the time transitioning the physical body from a calm state into shivering, choking, cramping and vomiting caused by the flower consumption enzyme intoxication, which is eventually influencing the mental perspective of the performer.

The spectrum of activated senses navigates from visual eye pleasure of beautiful flowers, the rich smell of the bouquet, tactile softness, sweet nectar taste of flower petals, which is becoming bitter and intoxicating, causing discomfort to the performing body and the spectators who can experience psychosomatic stimulus.

The audience is experiencing the performance by encountering passive interaction, which creates emphatic relation towards the observed action of eating and choking by flowers. Such reactions are triggered by Mirror Neuron System (or so-called emphatic neurons) in Motor Cortex which determines our relationships and compassion toward other people.

### Marko Marković

Marko Marković is an artistic researcher on collective engagement in self-organized societies creating autonomous models of coexistence with performative communication strategies. In his work, performativity is considered through body art, happening, public space interventions, action, and identity re-positioning as social experiments.

As an independent curator and artistic producer, his interest was focused on international cultural exchanges with educational platforms in performance arts within the performance festival DOPUST/ Days of open performance 2008 - 2018. (Croatia, US, and Austria). He was awarded YVAA/ Young Visual Artist Award in 2011. He worked in the artistic and film production and project coordinator of Matthew Barney Studio in New York (2012-2014). Marković presented his work at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition/ La Biennale di Venezia 2016, La Biennale di Venezia - Biennale Sessions Giardini 2019 and 2016 International Biennial Moscow. Marković holds MA in Art & Science at the University of Applied Arts Vienna at the department where he worked as program coordinator for European Capital of Culture Rijeka 2020. He was visiting lecturer at UDK Berlin, Technical Uni Graz, Academy of Ars Zagreb, University of Applied Arts Vienna, and curator in

partnership with Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka and mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien. Currently enrolled in the LIT Project Digi Sense of the Institute of Informatics Engineering of the Johannes Kepler Universität Linz.  
Instagram: @marko.markvic

## 4 VirginCare 2.0

*Glass basin 85 x 30 x 10 cm; artificial hymen*

A basin full of red-beaked Pringles. This might be the first thing that comes to mind when standing in front of the water basin in which numerous swirling cellulose flakes with artificial blots of blood are lying neatly arranged in rows in the water. A closer look reveals the temperature controls. They indicate the water temperature, which is kept constantly at 36.5 degrees Celsius, corresponding to the average human body temperature.

The hymen does not exist. The hymen, as it is called in medical terminology, is a myth that has been perpetuated for generations and throughout different cultures for centuries. When we talk about the hymen, we mean a tiny part of the body that is not visible from the outside: a small, roundish ring of mucous membrane that surrounds the vaginal opening. If this ring of skin is damaged, it heals on its own and does not usually bleed. The hymen looks different for every woman, some have none at all, and in some, it changes during life; in others it remains unchanged even after giving birth.

On the wedding night, according to religious values, the man and woman enter into marriage as virgins and have sexual intercourse for the first time on this night. There is a lot of pressure on women in particular because many believe that they have to bring the undamaged hymen into the marriage as proof of their virginity. The blood-stained sheet is then considered proof of their chastity for both the groom and the parents-in-law. In patriarchal cultures where "honour" is a highly valued concept, a wedding night without blood can lead to the annulment of the marriage, the repudiation of the daughter and, in the worst case, to honour killing. Yet it is medically proven that more than half of all women do not bleed during their first sexual intercourse.

Agrina Vllasaliu's work VirginCare 2.0 alludes to a product by the company VirginaCare to "restore virginity": an artificial hymen made of cellulose plates filled with fake blood. "The fresh blood effect proves to the groom that she is untouched," says the manufacturer. In VirginCare 2.0, the artificial hymen disappear over time and with them their physical form, as well as the moral charge of this mystified body part.

### **Agrina Vllasaliu**

Born in 1990 in Pristina (Kosovo), Agrina Vllasaliu finished 2022 her Master of Fine Art at the University of Arts, Berlin. In the early 1990s, she fled with her parents from the impending war (1998-99) and grew up in Berlin, where she lives and works today. Influenced by growing up between two cultures, she is constantly on a search for identity and home, the interrogation of the role of women and the continuous questioning of norms. Her work oscillates between painting, sculpture and installation, in which physical experiences are translated into spatial perceptions.

Instagram: @agrina\_vllasaliu\_art

## 5 Alien Self

Installation

2022

In a world of *others*, how do we find space for the conception of ourselves?  
How much of how we see ourselves is how others have seen us?  
Should we cleanse ourselves of others so that we may be ourselves?

To say it is only about washing oneself is to obfuscate the feeling that sometimes "being clean" is not about *dirt* but rather abstracted *filth*. In times of insecurity and anxiety, it is about trying to save oneself, to find oneself underneath the invisible layers of others, those transactions of unintelligible touch. Maybe it is like drowning in the liquid of sequential abstractions of fathomable threats, and cleaning is like grasping at that liquid, trying to get out from it, to breathe again — only to look up at the mirror at oneself in dirtying doubt, to find the soap itself is filth, and to find the hand towel is shamefully lost to the floor. Do it again.

Shame and guilt cannot be washed away with soap. As a queer person, anxieties about the interface between the inward and the outward, about that boundary of self and what intimacy can mean, lead to coping mechanisms of hiding, of alienating oneself for the sake of others. In this way, queer expression is dirtied with parts of others, being touched by someone you may not know, presently or even before you were born.

*alien self* is about that part of ourselves from which we cower, that we have made foreign because of the dirtied mirror from which we learned to view ourselves. It is about how intimacy starts in subtler, filthier ways of self.

**Michael Robert Jimenez**

Born in the USA, lives in Vienna. Jimenez is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Mathematics at TU Wien and a Master's in the TransArts Class at the Angewandte. His main interests are in the instantiations of abstracted identity in both of those fields and their intersection. To him, symbol and representation are the means by which both explore the bearings and limits of abstract spaces.

Instagram: @mchLrj

## 6 The Measure of a Man\*

*Digital photography & Installation*

*Diptych, 3.5 x 4 cm, 1 mm Polystyrol 'Mounting', Fujicolor Print*

*60 x 80 x 1.6 cm, Coated Wood, Painted White*

2019/2021

Toxic masculinity sets stringent and detrimental standards on what male\* bodies should look like, often resulting in shame or unwarranted pride. The entertainment and (gay) porn industries perpetuate an unrealistic bar against which male-identifying folks measure their self-worth. In its most literal sense, that measurement is the size of the penis, where large penises are used as a signifier of potent masculinity or a source of great pleasure. In extreme cases, for cis- and transmen, this can lead to penile dysmorphic disorder and cause significant shame or sexual disfunction that is not often talked about. I interrogate these standards and ideals in this work, presented in small-format prints (3.5 x 4 cm), mounted on a miniature wall (60 x 80 cm) and displayed with an accompanying 4-factor loupe.

## Daniel Hill

My work focuses on people and examines questions of intimacy, identity, sexuality, connectivity within the context of queer identity and expression, gender and body politics, and social conventions of hetero- and homonormativity. I often work with my own body as a visual representation of my journey to understand and explore my relationship to queerness, as well as my connection and place within the queer community. In collaboration with other queer artists, I also explore the sense of community itself, questioning what it means and in what way we could (re)imagine it in non-heteronormative terms. The main medium of my work is analog photography. I see images as a poetic visual language about time and space that can be used to inform, educate, stimulate understanding (or confusion), elicit emotion, entertain, or even move people to action. Other mediums I employ include text, audio/video, and installation in order to enhance or expand the message beyond the confines of a framed photograph. I studied artistic photography at the Friedl Kubelka School for Artistic Photography and have participated in group exhibitions in Fotogalerie Wien, Off Grid Foto Festival, Q21/Raum D in Museumsquartier, PH21 Gallery in Budapest, and curated a group show at Kunstverein Kombinage in Vienna. Born in the USA, I live, work and study in Vienna.

Instagram/Facebook: @drh.photography

Website: [www.danielhillphotography.com](http://www.danielhillphotography.com)

## 7 VIBRATOR IN A BOX 1

*box with lid, vibrator*

*d= 9,5/12 cm × h= 11,5 cm*

*edition of 3*

*2018*

A white take-away container on the floor is sliding in irregular movements over the floor. With every movement, the box makes sounds varying in intensity and rhythm: the friction of the box running over the floor and a rattling sound from inside the box. As the lid of the box is closed, you can not guess the content inside of it.

This specific take-away box was selected for its broken industrial perfection: A white, semi-matt container with balanced proportions; no logo, text or unexpected edges distract from its simple form. Only the two small holes in the lid are not centred.

The semantic context of a well-known daily object is disturbed by the container's uncharacteristic movement and sound. The unknown content of the box leaves open a wide range of fantasy, association and interpretation of its content: Take-away culture—fast, urban, capitalistic—catching and keeping living creatures in captivity—eating living beings...?

Only the title of the artwork reveals what is inside the box. The imagination and interpretation changes before and after knowing the title. The moving ready-made sculpture is called VIBRATOR IN A BOX 1. Once the content is revealed, it is not the content but the box itself that becomes the subject of interpretation: Repressed sexuality trying to escape—ready to burst ...?

## Margrit Barner

Margrit Barner is a multidisciplinary activist and artist working in sculpture, video and photography. Her work usually stems from a very personal experience and perspective and revolves around the human body as an object of pleasure and around concepts of life that deviate from the norm.

Among other places, she has been exhibiting at the Exgirlfriend Gallery Berlin and the Stadtmuseum Dresden. She is curating the pop-up art space casino on Sonnenallee in Berlin Neukölln. In 2021 she founded the publishing house sabotage L.A. publishing.

Website: <https://margritbarner.de> Instagram: @margritbarner



# Open Mic "Hast du Lust?" hosted by ZIMT

June 2, 6 PM

Improper Walls, Reindorfgasse 42, 1150 Vienna

Mental health and sex remain taboo subjects - individually and especially in combination. We want to change that. Come join our Open Mic and listen in or recite your own poems, short stories and diary entries on sexuality and wellbeing.

Don't have a text ready but want to participate? Here are some questions you could use to guide you in your writing process:

- How does your mental health influence your sexuality?
- How does your sexuality influence your mental health?
- What effects do psychotropic drugs have on your sexuality?
- What role does shame have in your sexuality?
- What's the one thing you always wanted to speak about?

Please register via Eventbrite

Open Mic - Hast du Lust? is a cooperation between Improper Walls and ZIMT Magazine, who joined forces to fight mental health stigma.

## ZIMT

ZIMT is a young, interdisciplinary, multimedia Online-Magazine, which aims to destigmatize mental health. Its content ranges from journalistic portraits and artful depictions of mental illness to in-depth investigations into societal issues. At ZIMT, everyone is invited to contribute and make journalism more inclusive. By hosting physical events, the magazine makes room for conversations that may not happen otherwise. Talking about "it" helps.

Website: <https://zimtmagazin.at/>

Instagram/Tiktok: @zimtmagazin

# Installation "(un)telling pleasure" by puro conjuro (part I & part II)

Part I: June 8, 3-7 PM

Part II: June 24, 7PM

Improper Walls, Reindorfgasse 42, 1150 Vienna

*Installation, mixed media*  
2022

(un)telling pleasure is an ephemeral installation in which visitors are invited to enter a tender shelter to (un)tell their stories around lived problems experiencing pleasure. The act of (un)telling,

both in its physical and acoustic dimensions, allows to open a healing space for the (un)teller in the exhibition space. Unfolded in two parts and as separate events, the stories recorded in the installation will be later mixed in a live set creating a collective narrative that allows the different (un)tellings to find resonances and, perhaps, dissonances, with each other.

### **puro conjuro**

puro conjuro is a gender-viscous multidisciplinary artist - now based in Vienna. Their current theoretical, matteReal and artistic obsession is textural thinking through viscosity and slime. With their last music and performative project "Mousse de Pus" they have been vomiting punkdemia and generating emotional raves through Spanish and Basque venues and streets. Since 2018 they have been performing in these-wordly-planets with their cyberfeminist performance group "Diosas de la Máquina".

Website: <https://moussedepus.bandcamp.com/releases>

Instagram: @puro.conjuro

## Screening of a short film "AUTOAGGRESSION" by Martin Willibal Meisl

June 9, 8 PM

Improper Walls, Reindorfgasse 42, 1150 Vienna

*Short film*

27"

AUTOAGGRESSION is a autobiographical shortfilm about bug chasing, the intentional self-infection with HIV.

In the work, author and director Martin Willibald Meisl deals with his memories and tries to explore his own motivations. - When did the tendency towards self-destructive behaviour arise and which ones can be seen? For that he works with reenactments of artworks such as photos by Joel-Peter Witkin or Michaelangelo's Pietá.

A look at the later consequences of the decision is given. Discrimination, side effects of the HIV therapy but also with the feelings of the fresh infection. There is a clear change in his sexuality, new positions taken.

### **Martin Willibald Meisl**

Martin Willibald Meisl is a Vienna / Austria based artist. He works mostly in an autobiographical context, especially inner-psychological films. Further - desires, sexuality and reflecting on the own emotions and triggers. For this he is using elements as dance, singing and shock to get the viewer into discomfort - to create a particular reality.

Currently he is studying Stage Design at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

### **Film screening**

The short film will be screened on June 9th at 8 PM at Improper Walls . After the screening and Q&A session will be held with the author and director Martin Willibald Meisl.

Due to limited seats, we would like to ask you to register *here*.