

# ANAT EBGI

Contemporary  
Art Review

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**Gabriela Ruiz at Anat Ebgi**  
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**Gabriela Ruiz, *You are here* (2022). Insulation foam, spray paint, mirrors, Lycra, yarn, and video on a wooden frame, dimensions variable.**

The human body is not a twinkie. What does it look and feel like to know one's corporeal form is in a state of decay but want to protect it anyway? Futurition, the title of Gabriela Ruiz's exhibition at Anat Ebgi, is a word that has fallen out of use—it refers to the assurance of a future (like the kind early revivalists promised their followers). Such a promise naturally ignites a fresh desire to preserve the body. And, across sculptural paintings, soundscapes, and video projections, Futurition recognizes the human condition and the cacophonous stress response to impending doom. Does one cope by smoking a cigarette? Drinking? Taking more vitamins? Exercising? Seeking shelter under a disco ball? Ruiz manages these disparate approaches and prepares for a future where either decomposition or preservation is a potential eventuality—or both.

Self-fashioning is a meaningful element of the exhibition: several works play with the idea of constructing physical evidence of the self despite knowing that it's likely a futile effort. *Movimiento* (all works 2022) is a gothic, amorphous blob with cutouts, chains, and multiple metal piercings. This large-scale sculptural piece (made from acrylic, filament, plastic, and silicone) is an example of Ruiz's signature use of industrial, often toxic materials. The use of these indestructible mediums allows Ruiz to conceive of ways to preserve her body with items one might find at their local hardware store. In *Movimiento*, circular cutouts in the sculpture are filled with plastic body casts of the artist's face—a structural monument to the visage that can

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live on in perpetuity; a form of toxic permanence combatting a decaying body. Rather than lament the fact that an increasingly noxious future means there's perhaps an untimely expiration date for the skin she lives in now, Ruiz reappropriates the aforementioned durable materials to leave behind an indelible impression of her physical essence.

In the painting *Genesis*, a Lite-Brite pink, green, and blue abstract figure casts a marbled, glowing shadow across a royal blue puddle with a foamy, 3-D silver lining. The puddle is surrounded by a sky blue halo, beyond which is total darkness, save for a silver spiral and butterfly that emit green and red glows respectively. Made from a chaotic mix of mediums—paint marker, acrylic, gouache, airbrushed acrylic, and insulation foam on wood panel—this sculptural painting further externalizes Ruiz's physical form. The warm luster of the piece and the figure's vague resemblance to the artist appear to convey an out-of-body experience, allowing Ruiz to glean a third-person perspective on the show's unbridled manifestation of her body and mind reconnecting outside of herself.

The elaborate sculptural installation *You are here* drapes itself across two walls and features a video projection that beams through a window constructed at the installation's center. Everything is hot pink—the insulation foam that surrounds the video frame, the cascading, silky Lycra, the delicately suspended webs of yarn, and the barely-visible foam-text close to the bottom of the structure that reads “you are here.” The projected video features multi-channel collages of Ruiz's naked body, which is covered in circular nodules that reveal even more self-portraits, like a meta funhouse. Here, Ruiz reimagines surveillance as a possible tool for preservation—a version of object permanence that might outlast the body.

Ruiz's temporal works come together to offer a defiant mode of future-thinking, one that repurposes tech and industrial supplies into vessels for sustaining the flesh, or tangible proof of it—even if they're the very kind of materials that are killing us. Futurition braves precarity with a resourceful resilience that embraces toxicity as a means for endurance.