MOUSSE

Louisa Gagliardi, Adam Cruces and Greg Ito "Over and Under" at monCHÉRI, Brussels
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The pins served as holders for the pieces of cut paper. But most importantly they allowed the cutouts to maintain a tentative and contingent character, therefore to be rearranged and rethought. The perforation of the surface was only meant to be temporary. Once the cutouts had found their definite array within an artwork the pins were removed. Whereas Matisse's apprehension of perforation represents a tentative status in the development of his artistic work, the piercing of the skin, and the adaptation of the corporal surface with pictorial and ornamental elements in general stand for a determined choice to form one's physical identity these days.

Body modification conduces not only to an individual perception and expression of a human being's outer appearance, it also has a significant influence on the notion of sexual pleasure and stimulation. However, individuality is additionally conveyed in domestic situations by using flowers and fruits as decorative elements. Arranged in vases or bowls, they modify and personalize a living space. Nature, therefore, is no longer only experienced outdoor. It has been turned into another form of expressing oneself through becoming a spatial ornament.

Arranged in loose diptychs, Louisa Gagliardi's portraits and Adam Cruces' still lifes demonstrate such an intervention on the canvas in combination with the use of piercings, tattoos, and body crystals. They show the petrified beauty of a captured instant. The bodies of Gagliardi's figures and their respective parts are flawless, hairless, and indistinguishable from one another.

Whereas piercings only emphasize specific parts, tattoos as well as body crystals and vajazzles draw attention to entire body regions. By replacing body hair with glittery particles, they have become a surrogate for natural features. Like the figures, the flowers and fruits of Cruces' still life paintings are depicted as utterly perfect. Their process of decay has been interrupted on the canvas. They embody an immaculate product of the consumer society and do not cease to be visually appealing. Yet in Greg Ito's work the fruits' perishable disposition is integral; the sculptures are set out to an increasing state of mutation due to their natural consistency. Their gradual decomposition during the course of the exhibition can be read as an equation with the decay caused by the passing of time. By including mirrors that possibly refer to the motif of vanitas, the withering character of Ito's work is furthermore enhanced.

Clearly, this aspect of the decay can also be found in the ephemeral nature of aesthetics rooted in popular culture. Ideas change, tastes and preferences are replaced. However, their traces left on the past are never fully erased, if one looks at the upper structure in Matisse's cutouts, or simply at the surface of a human body. A modified surface owns a contingent character. Body crystals and piercings can be removed and tattoos erased. Here, they represent different single stages of beauty. Some of them are temporary, exposed to passing time. Others determined, caught in a beautiful moment.