

A S S
H A R D
A • S
L I F E

Elke Auer & Esther Straganz



“We are the before and the after.
We are the future and the present.
We are the inside and the outside,
the face and the reverse.”

(Slightly modified quote of Lygia Clark)

Elke Auer (1980) and Esther Straganz (1979) both studied in Vienna at the University of Applied Arts in the class of Karel Dudesek respectively Peter Weibel and have been working together since the turn of the millenium.

They use found and bought things, language and bodies to create performative sculptures, photographs, paintings, posters, videos and installations.

In 2007 they founded the group GirlsOnHorses together with Eva Egermann and Julia Wieger, with whom they were also running the emancipatory speakers forum "PostProloClub". In 2008 they started to work on and with monsters and assembled "The League Of Extraordinary Bastards".

A handful of monsters were recruited to deal with questions of normativity and desire, radically extended, stretched, knotted and fragmented bodies.

In December 2010 they established the animist condition VOOKOOV to meet their growing interest in ritual & play, eggs, antennas, vibration & contamination, phantom spaces, tarantism and all kind of holes.

From August 2012 to December 2012 they were part of the FAAP residency program and therefore spent 133 days and nights in the Centro of the great mad city of São Paulo.

They lick souls and they like to play with dead things.

vookoov.net

LÌNGUAS E LÌNGUAS
TONGUES AND LANGUAGES
ZUNGEN UND SPRACHEN

3 Silkscreen Posters

1 Video

1 Book

Many Objects

LÍNGUAS E LÍNGUAS

is a multi-layered project that we developed during 133 days that we spent in Sao Paulo, in a studio provided by the artist in residency program of FAAP and co-funded by the art section of BMUKK.

In portuguese, like in most other latin languages, the word „língua“ means tongue as well as language and therefore combines two raw axes of our art practice, the body (tongue) and its representation (language) in one word.

Tonguing a new territory and meeting the Material:

The first few weeks in Sao Paulo we spent reading, touching, licking and looking at the works of three brazilian women: Lygia Clark, Clarice Lispector and Suely Rolnik. And as all true encounters involve molecular blurring, the matter created by this three brazilian chain smokers has greatly contaminated our works.

“Líguas e Líguas” was and is, over all, an attempt to “apprehend the world in its intensive dimensions: as a diagram of forces that affect us and are present in our bodies in the form of sensations.” This line, taken from Suely Rolniks concept of the resonant body, which she came up with to write about the body of work of Lygia Clark in an adequate way, echoes through this project.

The awareness of how bodies are made or unmade in language and art in the books and works of all three women made us looking for the lines that connect them, and for what is happening between the lines. Because between the lines there is the desire for the not normal situation: Speaking in tongues, eating words, vomiting words, treating words like bodies, stripping a text from a rock. Lines, numbers, stones, vibration, bananas and vomiting: the cornerstones of a potential common ground.

L S C

Poster series

Silk screen, A2

3 Motives

Produced in the silk screen studio of FAAP
in an edition of 21 prints/motive.

After the research phase we wanted to condense
what we have found in 3 mantras.

These 3 mantras consist in each case of four
Portuguese words that we chose to
represent the core of the work and life of Lygia
Clark, Clarice Lispector and Suely Rolnik.
They are both, homage and incantation.



Mantra 4 Lygia
Or the Empty / Full of Lygia Clark
(STONE, SKIN, BODY, AIR)

VIBRAÇÃO
MATÉRIA
CONTA-
MINAÇÃO
MENTE

Mantra 4 Suely

Or the Resonant Body of Suely Rolnik

(VIBRATION, MATERIA, CONTAMINATION, MIND)

COMER
VOMITAR
PALAVRA
LÍNGUA



Mantra 4 Clarice
Or the Wet & The Dry of Clarice Lispector
(EAT/FUCK, VOMIT, WORD, TONGUE)

PELE DE BANANA
BANANA SKIN
BANANENHAUT

Sculpture
Foam and Paint
1.40m x 2m

PELE DE BANANA
BANANA SKIN
BANANENHAUT

it is very yellow.
i think i don't know
anything more yellow.
very bright, very deep yellow.

quite soft but with a hardened surface
on one side.
not really hard, but a little bit raspy,
like the top layer of a creme brulee.
banana creme brulee.

covered with black spots.
black hard shiny spots.
black like tar.
fast spots.
marks of encounters.
there was resolute movement involved.

it is dimensioned like a carpet.
but thicker.
it looks beautiful from every angle.
it lightens up the room.

when it lies flat, on the floor,
the spots save it from
appearing inanimate.
but when it is tumbling
through the air,
or quickly folded in endless variations,
it creates a body,
a huge space of potentials.

once, i saw it becoming
a fortune cookie.
Keep this secret.
And in order not to go
mad, eat fried eggs.





LÌNGUA JOVEM
YOUNG TONGUE
JUNGE ZUNGE

Sculpture
Palm leaf
0.4 m x 2.10m

LÌNGUA JOVEM
YOUNG TONGUE
JUNGE ZUNGE

it is big and brown.
a big warm brown tongue.
crosswise it does not fit in a regular car.

it lived on a tree.
a palmeira.
then, slowly, it ran out of juice.

it has been wet and became dry.
like clarice.
dry and hard and a bit more fragile.

it was part of a sweet threesome
sandwich dance.
pauli, pedro and the tongue.
but words- it moves cautiously around them.

good luck suckers.



PODE CUSPIR
YOU CAN SPIT
DU KANNST SPUCKEN

Short film
HD, 7 minutes

In collaboration with Felipe Campos, Guilherme Salvadori Ferro, Gregory Nascimento Silva, Paulo Assumpção, Pedro Izolan and Christoph Gawenda

For this work we invited 5 boys from São Paulo and 1 actor from Berlin to experiment together, with objects, movements and languages. After three weeks of preparation and along a fragmentary script we shot material during two days in the video studio of FAAP.







ON PAN AND TRAJAN

3 SCULPTURAL RE-INTERPRETATIONS

Exhibition

Garden of the Romanian Academy

Rome 2013

MIHAI
MIYEAH
YEAH YEAH YEAH
YEAH YEAH YEAH
YEAH YEAH YEAH

Original Sculpture:
Bust of Mihai Eminescu
by Oscar Han
1930

Mihai Eminescu was a Romantic poet, novelist and journalist, and one of the most famous and influential Romanian poets. In June 1883, 33 years old, Mihai fell seriously ill. In his last years (1883-1889), after seeing various doctors, Mihai was diagnosed with differing disorders. Neghina R. and Neghina A. M. after reviewing medical hypotheses, concluded that "he suffered from bipolar disorder and died from mercury poisoning, an inadequate treatment administered as the result of an inaccurate diagnosis (syphilis). Hospitalized in inappropriate places and treated by incompetent physicians, he suffered not only physical, but moral, distress and died prematurely", at a Sanatorium on June 15, 1889.



WOLFI & TRAJAN

Original Sculpture:

Trajan and the She-wolf

by Vasile Gorduz

1994

Vasile Gorduz created three copies of this sculpture: one is located in Sevilla, Spain, one on the steps of the National Museum of Romanian History in central Bucharest and another in Rome, in front of Accademia di Romania.

The sculpture depicts a nude Trajan, the Roman emperor who conquered Dacia, the province located in today's Romania and who is considered one of the "parents" of the Romanian nation.

In his arms, in fact appearing to levitate above his arms, is the Capitoline Wolf, the she-wolf in the founding myth of Rome. The head of the wolf is joined to the tail of a Dacian Draco.

The statue was not well received by the Bucharesters, who met it with derision, due to the nudity and the awkwardness of Trajan's statue, being described as "a monument to Romania's stray dogs", with commentators wondering why "the dog is levitating", and why the animal wears a scarf "while the emperor isn't even wearing any underwear".

Trajan, now dressed to impress, in black lace, presents the symbol of a new pansexual generation:

Wolfi, effortlessly levitating above the hands of Trajan, sporting triple-tits and a sexual organ growing out of the brain, suggesting to be a phallus as much as a hole.





A TIT IS A TIT IS A TIT
UNLESS OF COURSE
IT IS A FLOATING ISLAND
IN A POOL OF PAN'S SPIT

Original Sculpture:

Pan

by Dimitrie Paciurea

1931

Introducing the pansexual trinity: three
synthetic tits, floating in the fountains
basin of god pan, the goat-fucker.



HOLE AND SOUL BEYOND CONTROL

THE MONUMENTAL MENTAL
PICK OF THE BUNCH
BOB, BRONCO, PAULI AND THE ANTENNA
WILL FINALLY VOOKOOV VIENNA

In their second exhibition at the VBKÖ Elke Auer
& Esther Straganz showed three cycles of work
that they have created over the last 18 months.

First Cycle
LICK OUR SOULS
Installation

Second Cycle
IF IT IS NOT BESIDE YOU IT IS INSIDE YOU
7 Photographs, Posters, Objects

Third Cycle
VOOKOOV
Photo series

HOLE AND SOUL
BEYOND
CONTROL



HOLE AND SOUL BEYOND CONTROL

Photograph, Flyer, 2012



IF IT IS
NOT BESIDE YOU
IT IS INSIDE YOU
Photographs, Posters, Objects



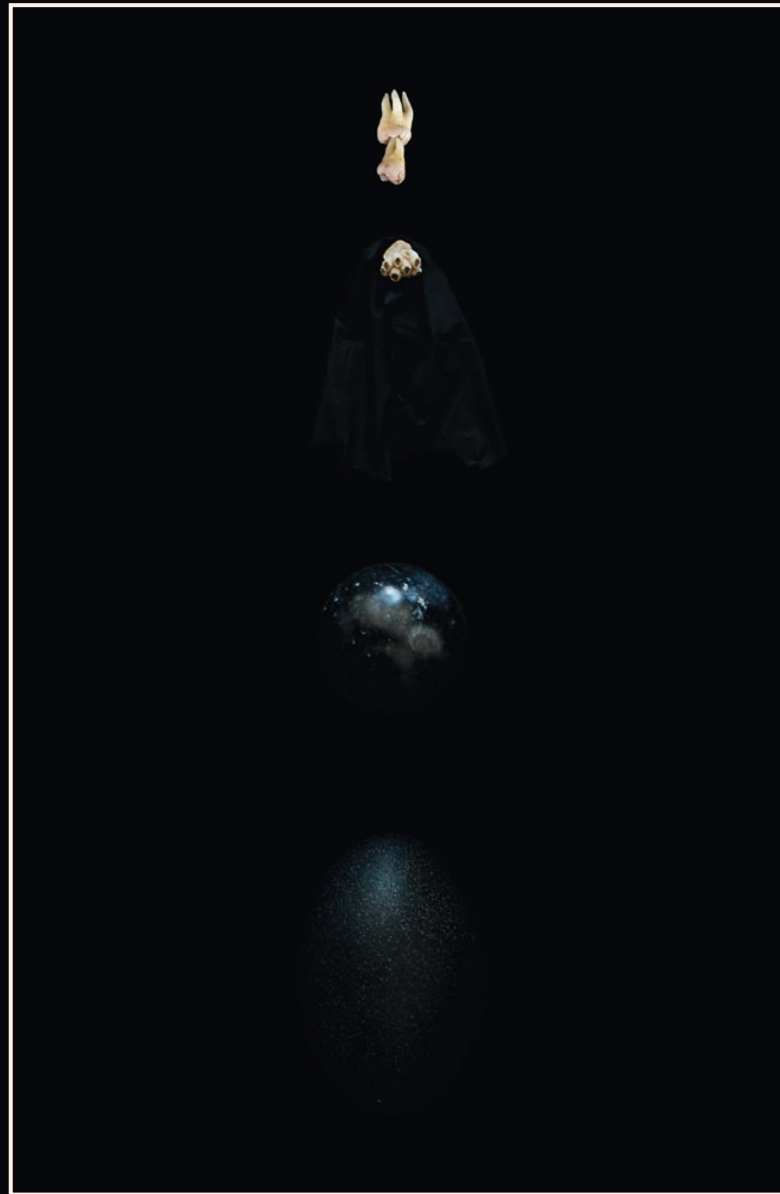
LICK OUR SOULS

Photograph, Posters, Sculptures

IF IT IS NOT BESIDE YOU IT IS INSIDE YOU

For Steirischer Herbst Festival we invited the Brazilian medium Felipe Campos to explore with us the concept of animism and our interest in the soul of objects. What if we attribute social roles to stones or towels, if laptops solidarise with lap-dogs, if demystified objects strike back? IF IT IS is about "mana", the power of the soul, and those bastards that populate the blurred boundary between body and soul, subject and object, human and non-human.

IF IT IS

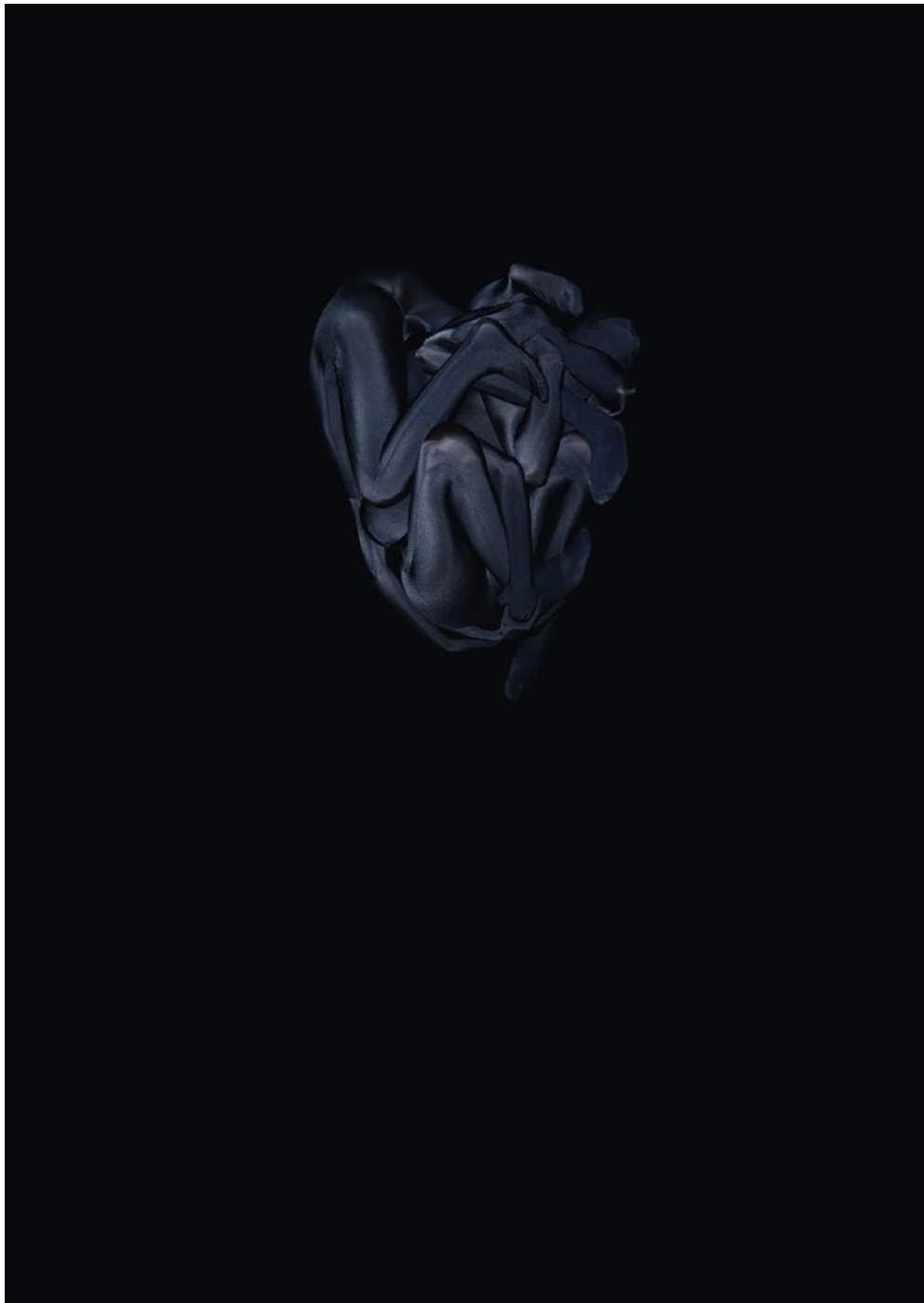


an Emu Egg, a Candy Ball, a Dental Dam, a Sea Shell,
a Wisdom Tooth, a Wisdom Tooth

Photograph, Flyer, 2011

**THE CANDY BALL
WRITES A NOTE TO
THE FLYING KNOT
THAT READS:**

**WE ARE MELTING
AND BECOMING
A BLACK BLOC OF
SENSATIONS
AN ANONYMOUS
FORCE
OF COURSE**

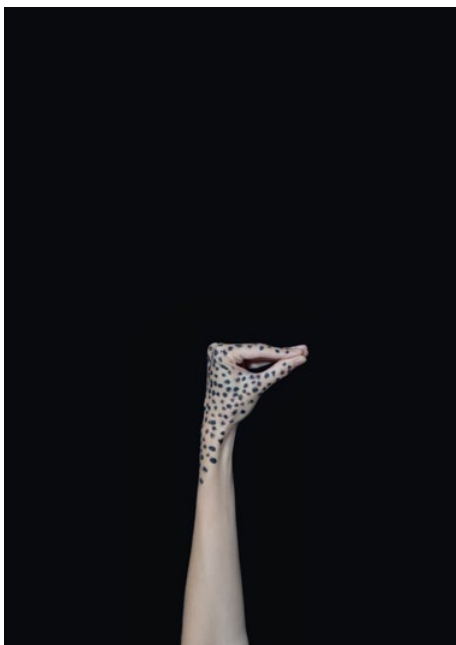
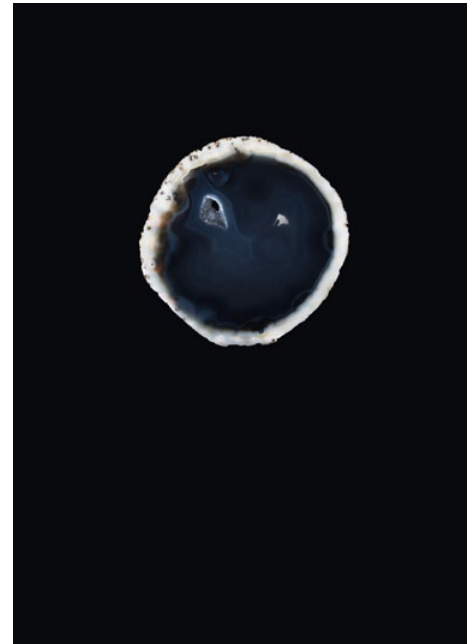


THE TEETH GANG
WANTS TO TALK
THE CACTUS
INTO AN
UNFINISHED
SYMPATHY
FANG BANG



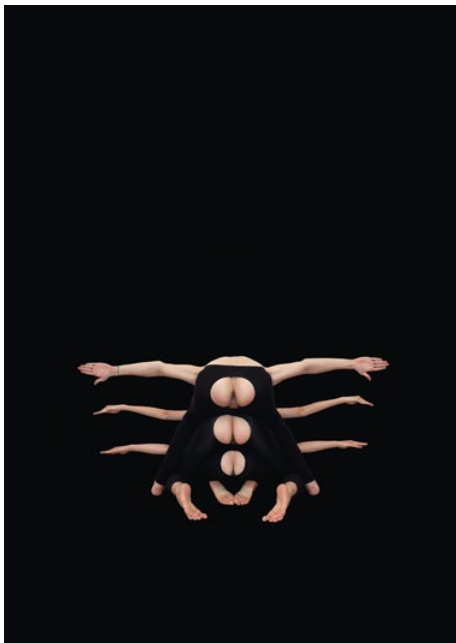
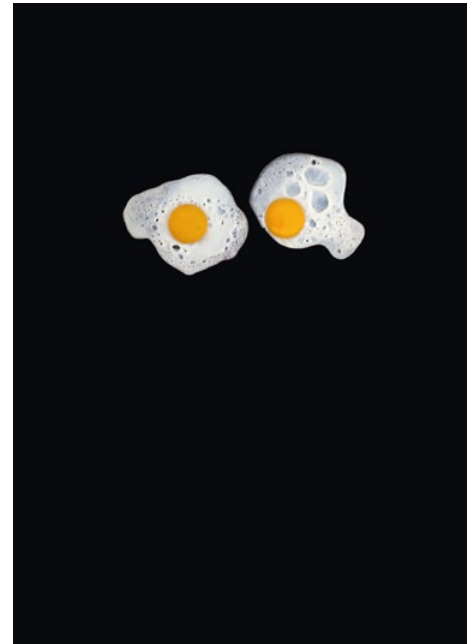
THE BLACK TOWEL
SINGS FOR THE
STONE LAKE:

EYE EXPLORE
EYE SEA A SHORE
EYE WANT MORE
MEET ME ON THE
DANCE FLOOR



THE DENTAL DAM
WALKS WITH THE
SILENT DUCK
THROUGH HAZE
AND FOLDING
SPACE

THE BLACK MASK
TRIES TO CONFUSE
THE FRIED EGGS
WITH CROSS-EYED
PHILOSOPHY
SCHMOOZE



THE BLACK EGG
SAYS TO THE ANAL
PANIC TOTEM POLE:

WE ARE ABOUT
POTENTIAL AND
HYSTERICAL
BEGINNINGS
ABOUT ASS & SOUL
BEYOND CONTROL

**THE MEDIUM
WANTS YOU TO
KNOW:**

**THE OBJECT PERSON
IS NOT THE OBJECT
THAT IS BESIDE YOU
BUT YOUR RELATION
TO THE OBJECT
THAT IS INSIDE YOU**

VOOKOOV PLAYING WITH FORCES

Photographs,
London, 2011

VOOKOOV is a minimal animist condition
VOOKOOV is cross eyed philosophy
VOOKOOV is unfinished sympathy
VOOKOOV is a collection of affects
VOOKOOV is dancing with black sneakers
VOOKOOV is vibration and contamination
VOOKOOV is awareness
VOOKOOV is a spitting spirit
VOOKOOV is bastardization vs. purification
VOOKOOV is manamana



ANTENNA 1

The Antenna is a magical pass that was developed by Carlos Castaneda. In this magical pass, the hands act as antennas, pulling and reaching for the enormous energy in the universe, coming from silent and invisible sources, from dead stars.



FLOATING MATTER



ANTENNA 2

VOOKOOV
BLISS PISS RITE

Poem

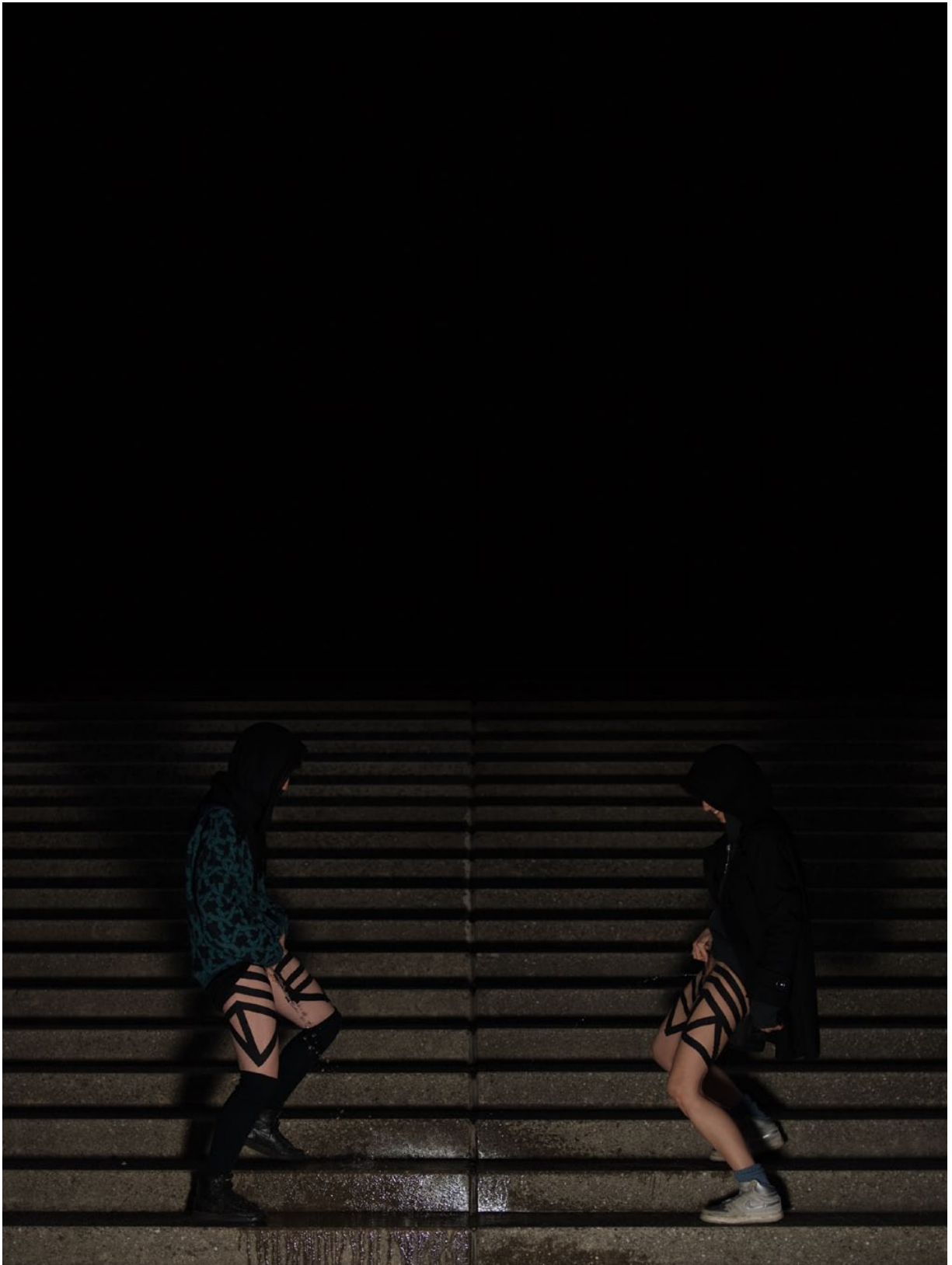
Photograph
70 x 100 cm,
Vienna 2010

Poster
90cm x 100cm
Vienna, 2010

A TIGHT NIGHT
SILVER LINING
SOUR SHOWER
WILD SPRITE

TRIGGER FINGER
MIDDLE FINGER
V
BEND YOUR KNEE

TILT YOUR HIPS
LIFT YOUR LIPS
LET IT FLOW
YO



VOOKOOV BLISS PISS RITE
Photograph, 70 x 100 cm, Vienna 2010

LICK SUCK
OUR OUR
SOULS HOLES
FUCK GANG
OUR PENG
ROLES PLAY

VOOKOOV CHANT

Poster,

90cm x 100cm

Vienna, 2010

Contribution for a poster exhibition at the public space Praterstern in Vienna.

LICK OUR SOULS BLENDED BODIES AND GOLDEN LOOPHOLES

Exhibition

Austrian Cultural Forum London, 2010

For „Lick Our Souls“ we were working on becoming wave - a giant wave of many hands, legs and souls, rolling fast, wild and unstoppable, collecting all kinds of vectors of collective queer intelligence. The result was a multi-dimensional playground, an inter-zone where all kinds of sex toys, possibilities and conflicts suddenly appeared, causing a ridiculous chaos of violent happiness.

At the opening we performed to the “Lick my Ass” canon of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (K. 233/382d) in our Anal Panic Pants together with BOB the holy cross dresser, BRONCO the shiny chav, RIDER the domesticated banana and PAULI the ultra realistic hole, translating our interdisciplinary reflections on the body into marvelous monstrous moves with an energy that was both welcoming and confrontational.

WE ARE THIS
WE ARE THAT
EACH IN ALL
ALL IN EACH

LICK OUR SOULS
SUCK OUR HOLES
FUCK OUR ROLES
GANG PENG PLAY

ALWAYS AND NEVER
ELASTIC FANTASTIC
BASTARDS
FOREVER

WILD DRAG TO SHARE
SCULPTURES TO WEAR
BECOMING WAVE
JOIN THE MICRO RAVE

WE ARE, WE ARE
Poem



Exhibition view:

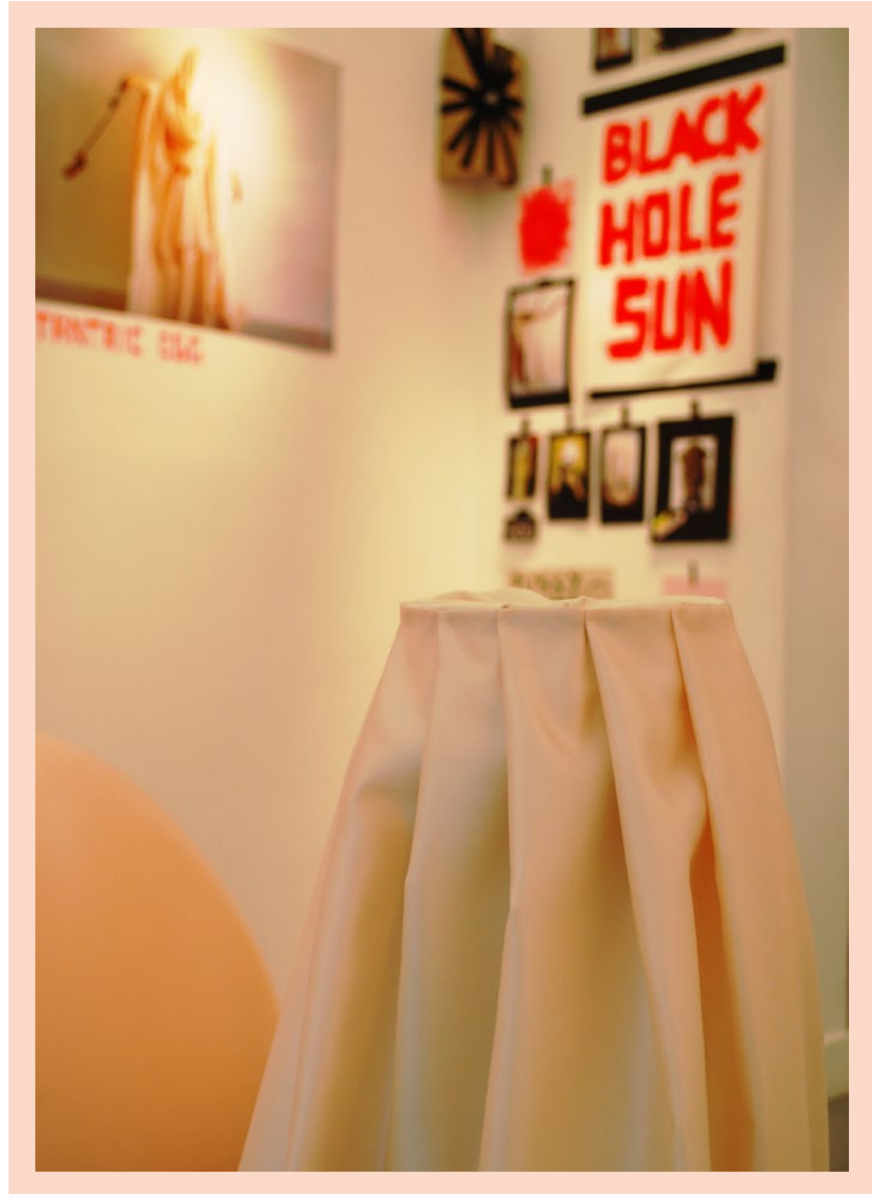
LICK MY ASS (Slideshow, wall in the back)

BOB THE HOLY CROSSDRESSER (penis sculpture)

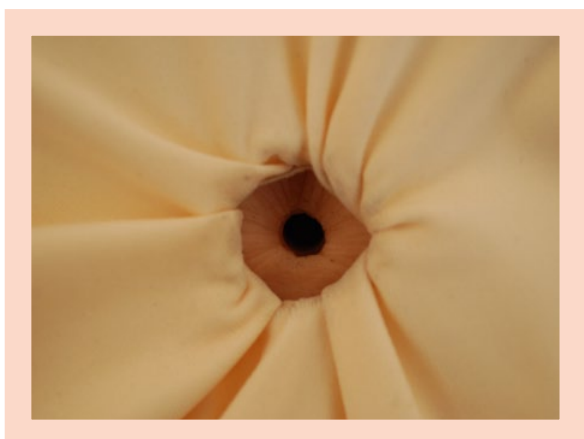
THE FIST (hanging sculpture)

various posters and photographs

THE DRESSED UP HOLE WILL HEAL YOU ALL (sculpture, front)



THE DRESSED UP HOLE WILL HEAL YOU ALL, Sculpture, 2010





PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM
Sculpture, 2010



BRONCO
Photograph



ANGELO
Photograph



BOB AS HOLY MARY
Photograph



THE FIST

Sculpture, 2010

During a residency in Schaerbeek, Brussels, we rescued „The Fist“ from a sex shop called „Sex World“ in Rue Brabant. Tangling happily from the ceiling of the gallery it is an unmistakable contemporary version of an Akateko, a yōkai, or Japanese monster, from the folklore of Aomori prefecture that appeared as an infant’s hand hanging down from a tree.