



The exhibition and performance "**Peek me**" is the result of the dialogue between the two artists **Chantal Spapens** and **Maria Luisa Figueiredo**, with the curatorial support and critical writings of **Elisa Panisson** and **Victoria Froberg**.

The exhibit is scheduled from **25 January 2024 to 9 February 2024 at Pastificio Cerere in Via Ausoni/7A**. The Finissage (closing exhibition) for Peek Me will be 8 February 2024 6:30pm-8:00pm, located in the same space.

The title "**Peek me - A multi sensorial encounter with desire**" refers to the concept of desire. We all experience attraction, which can be both psychological and physical; we aspire for our goals and dreams to come true, we have unattainable obsessions, and we thirst—as a primordial need—for contact with human beings.

Desire stems from an absence, a lack of something, which leads us to seek and satisfy it, because desire is an engine that turns us on, an innate drive at the core of human existence, an intricate web of motivation that propels us forward on life's journey.

The vivid red colour is the expression of this primordial drive that unites the works of the two artists. The colour has associations with the feminine, and therefore earth, as well as blood.

In the works presented by these two artists, we not only experience an intimate view of their aspirations, but how they challenge their perceived gender roles while engaging with a collective vision. Beyond relational and beyond love, there is a depth present in the red, the colour becomes a tool to convey deeper layers of intimacy: anger, passion, grief.

The curated selection of artworks investigates precisely the different ways in which hope is expressed through the contrast between them, which in ways, materials and gestures make you feel the great power the sensation brings to the body.

Engage all five senses as you navigate through the exhibition, as they speak directly to the visitor about their own concept of desire. The visitor is called upon to move around the exhibition space, observing the paintings and installations, but also interacting with them by touching them. The visitor has the magnificent opportunity to see, feel and smell the action or the after of the performance.

"**Peek me**" also means spy me, the two artists attract us, provoke us, they offer a unique perspective on desire. Each piece draws the viewer into a world of intense emotions, blurring the lines between reality and imagination. The exhibition challenges preconceived notions of desire.

As you leave the exhibition, ponder the question: "How do you desire?"

Let yourself be carried away by the excitement of the sound of an accelerated heartbeat. Explore the interactive elements that beckon you to question and reflect on your own desires. The answer is as unique as each individual, and explores the intricate nature of human desire. This exposition is a provocation, a celebration, and an exploration into the depths of our most primal instincts.

**Chantal Spapens** is a French/Dutch visual and performance artist who uses her work to challenge power dynamics and personal narratives within a capitalist, neoliberal, patriarchal society.

The performance element of the exhibition **“Is your blood as red as this”** will be featured beginning Thursday, January 25th, and the remnants of the performance will remain on display until February 2nd, allowing the public to observe the process of aging, change, and eventual “rot” of our desires.

Chantal explores ritual, challenging the viewer’s perception of gender roles, particularly around femininity, and the act of creation as a birth.

In the artist’s act of drinking from plaster vessels, incorporating 53 pomegranates throughout the performance, and the repetitive imagery of seed and womb featured throughout the exhibition, she has dubbed herself “mother”. She offers herself as sacrifice, bleeding on the floor.

The audience is offered permission to be messy in our own ambition, to explore our senses, releasing ourselves from the limiting constraints that our thirst for more must be quenched.

In **“The places I go in my head”** the macrame of the piece begins in a tight knit mass falling into strands that spread rapidly into varying directions. How many things can one dream up and yet be limited to in a physical form? There are depths within ourselves that still remain out of reach. Depending on the body you occupy or the land you are born to, aspiration can be presented with varying obstacles from conception to reality. Fantasy is a powerful tool in the practice of transformation, but in maintaining a sense of safety in our bodies.

**“Theatre of desire, (I wanted you to stay)”** provides the viewer with an entirely tactile experience removed from the indoor exhibition space. Swaying isolated in the breeze, fabric is in a hodge-podge of patterns and frantic rips. Reaching out longing on the wind, we are summoned to stay a bit longer, left with yearning and curiosity.

The artist moves beyond wanting as purely sexual or relational with **“A burning desire to return to white”**, the only piece removed from the red colours of the internal room. There is a sense of exhaustion conveyed in this piece, witnessing the end of an explosion, after one form of desire. How do we respond to our perceptions around desire being challenged?

No need is subtle if you are paying attention, if permission is granted. While there are small openings, secret passageways, sensual movements, soft fabrics, tendrils reaching for connection, and “blood”, there is no invitation for the viewer to enter the body. The artist never surrenders their agency—the artist invites the audience to turn inward instead, asking: Do you fear what you desire? Do you allow yourself space for the celebration of pleasure?

**Maria Luisa Figueiredo** is a young Portuguese artist, her artistic career has evolved from engaging oil paintings to captivating three-dimensional installations, which are simultaneously displayed in this exhibition. Her artistic language investigates the tension between desire and accessibility, in different languages, allowing the viewer to understand them through consensual access or through prohibition.

**“Feeling whole”** is the biggest painting of the exhibition, and the visitor will surely be drawn to it. In her paintings the artist uses the power of depth and perspective through the wise use of dark and powerful colours, such as black or red. The artist creates three-dimensional illusions that challenge and provoke the viewer; they arouse a tactile impulse, a need to explore the paintings through touch.

This boost cannot be realized as with all the paintings, in fact it makes us reflect on the pleasure of the forbidden, the attraction one feels in wanting to do something that increases in the moment it is forbidden, an instinct that goes back to when we were children. The common thread running through this entire exhibition, as we have already analyzed, is the concept of desire, including the sexual one. Consent is an important theme nowadays and it’s the opposite of the forbidden, unfortunately we are attracted to the forbidden, but in the same way that we cannot touch her paintings because she is not giving us consent, so one cannot touch, say or do acts in daily life without the other person’s consent. Her paintings therefore teach us to break our primal instincts in face of prohibition, and allow the viewer to decide and think about their own message of consent.

In addition to the paintings, in this exhibition, more space is given to his incredible three-dimensional installations, boxes that hide secrets, worlds to explore, and sensations to investigate. These installations are something absolutely contemporary, because they invite the viewer to interact with them, to actively engage with the art.

The installations allow the visitor to explore our cravings in different ways, with “**Cubo**” she represents the pleasure born in the act of observing that provokes arousal. The visitor becomes a voyeur, experiencing pleasure from the act of observing something provocative and secret, also increased by the fact that they have to press an inviting red button to access the eroticism of the internal artistic representation. But the visitor can do that thanks to the consent the artist gives in being able to spy inside on her artworks.

In the large three-dimensional installation “**Abbraccio**”, which means hug in Italian, the visitor is not only called upon to enter it, but also to touch it. What association has your imagination arrived at inside the work?

In this representation the visitor fulfills the physical and active need, his sexual satisfaction to enter and touch. Imagination becomes action, the velvet inside the box, refers to the sensation of touching the skin. The connection to the primordial act of sex, is evident from the moment the visitor must enter the work, and must touch it. The gratification of carnal pleasure and the consent to explore the work give power to the female organ, a place of birth, life and pleasure.

Maria Luisa with her works and materials creates different expressions of desire. She uses also warm and soft lights preparing our eyes to enter the world of attraction, warm lights create a cosy, intimate ambience, a warm invitation to passion.

Despite the theme of her artworks subject there is never a clear sexual image, nothing is vulgar, no image is explicit, they are all different sensory allusions, using the power of interpretation and imagination, this represents the magnificent way in which women represent lust and talk about the sexual act. Think of how you would have told and represented it and again how do you desire.

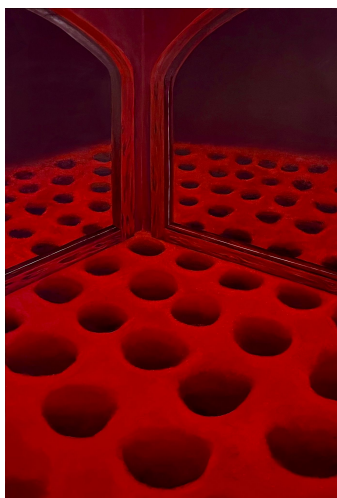


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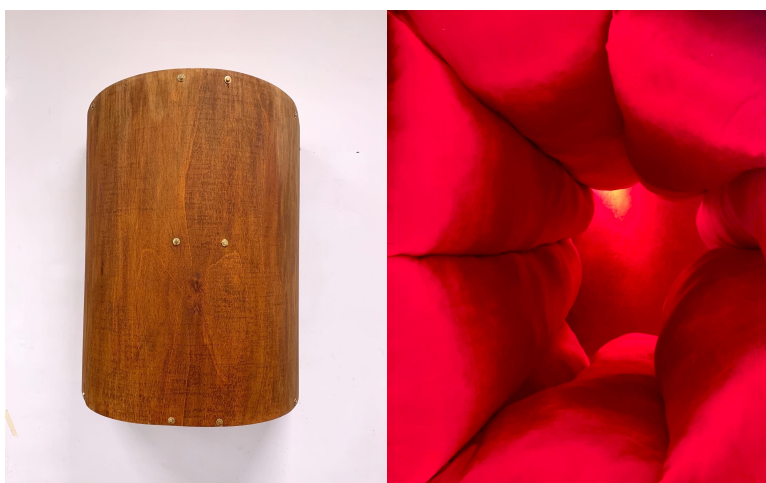


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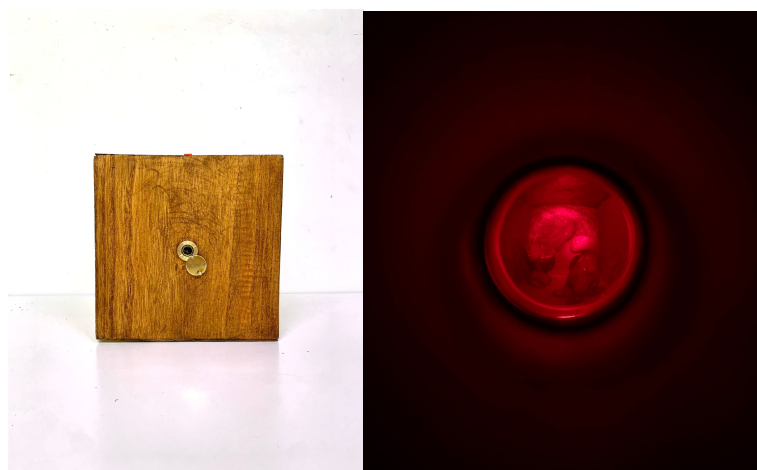
**PEEK ME**  
**A MULTI SENSORIAL ENCOUNTER WITH DESIRE**  
**January 25 2024- February 2 2024**



Maria Luísa Figueiredo  
"FEELING WHOLE"  
210 x 160 cm  
Oil on canvas  
2023



Maria Luísa Figueiredo  
"Abbraccio"  
150 x 100 x 60 cm  
Iron, Wood, Velvet, foam, LED  
2023



Maria Luísa Figueiredo  
"Cubo"  
20 x 20 x 20 cm  
Fine, velvet, ceramics, LED light  
2023



Chantal Spapen  
"Is your blood as red as this"  
Live performance  
6m on 25 January 2024



Chantal Spapens  
"The Places I go in my Head"  
200 x 50 x 50 cm  
Cord, thread, iron wire  
2023



Chantal Spapens  
"A burning desire to return to white"  
60 x 100 cm  
Oil on canvas  
2022



Chantal Spapens  
"Theater of Desire (I wanted you to stay)"  
250 x 200 cm  
Cotton sheets, thread, satin, ribbon  
between two brackets  
2023