

Bodies of Resistance

Eva Kořátková, Mai-Thu Perret,
Manuel Chavajay, Mónica Mays, Nora
Aurrekoetxea, Sara Graça, Wynn timer
Mynerva, Xie Lei

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Pedro Cera is pleased to present *Bodies of Resistance*, a group exhibition with new and existing works by Eva Kořátková, Mai-Thu Perret, Manuel Chavajay, Mónica Mays, Nora Aurrekoetxea, Sara Graça, Wynn timer Mynerva and Xie Lei.

For centuries, the body and its collective experience have become a site of political discourse, struggle, and regulation. It has been a central focus of political power, ideology, and control. One of the ways modern societies exercise power and control over populations is by managing their biological and physiological aspects, establishing a direct relationship between power, knowledge, and the body in contemporary society, thus making it also one of the most powerful tools of modern governance and societal control.

A fragmented sense of identity has replaced the idea of a stable, unified self, typical for the pre-modern. The body has been transformed into a complex and multifaceted self, shaped by various social, cultural, and technological influences. These transformed, fragmented, or even absent bodies, despite their pervading vulnerability, have served as a strong instrument of resistance to the interpretation of established historical narratives and prevailing political doctrines, opening paths to new economies, ways of thinking, being, and social organization.

Placed in a post-apocalyptic future, the exhibition introduces works that take the subject of the body as their point of departure. Envisioning the body's expansive future, the exhibition aims to emancipate the body from standardization and categorization. Hierarchies defined by gender, sexuality, race, or social class are rendered obsolete. Depicted on the edge of abstraction, as is the case of large-scale paintings by Wynn timer Minerva or Xie Lei, and their depiction in various states of transgression, these bodies refuse control and consumption, crossing the violent borders of sexual binarism and opening a path towards social transformation.

The deep involvement of our body with the normative nature of our social environment translates further in the work of Eva Kořátková. Focusing on the so-presumed fragile of society, in this case, ocean-dwelling animals, Kořátková's sculpture depicts the body of an octopus in a transitory state. The soft sculpture, reminiscent of a costume, is a container to be inhabited, a shelter for protection, a vulnerable creature with a fluid identity. With a strong emphasis on the body's emotional behavior, manifested by the placement and material side of the sculpture, questions related to emotional aspects of inter-species interaction are under scrutiny. The emotional states of non-standard bodies, their love, and desire, are also the subject of Nora Aurrekoetxea's two sculptures. Despite their abstract typology, the relational behavior of Aurrekoetxea's works suggests of their animate and experiential nature. They are based on the encounter of materials, of emotions, and the language the combination and treatment of these materials generate.

Despite ambiguous, these non-standardized bodies re-claim their rights, opening the doors to alternative narrative histories, the same way as do the invisible bodies channeled through the handmade ceramics of Mai-Thu Perret, the bead curtains of Sara Graça or the clay pots of Manuel Chavajay. These invented relics, blending traditional, artisanal, and spiritual practices, represent here

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the marginalized and wounded bodies circulating within the consumer systems of production and exchange.

The violence frequently implied on the body by industrial means of production, efficiency, and futurity are addressed further by Mónica Mays's exploration of the *Bombyx mori* silk moth life cycle, a reproductive process altered by human intervention, domestication, and industrialization. On the one hand, the work can be read through the extractive violence and biopower imposed on the animal, but also through the potential for the breaking of linear logic, the refusal of reproduction, and the embracing of mutation. Whether placed in Shadow Boxes - wooden gridded objects used for scientific categorization or wrapped with semi-transparent vellum veils and reminiscent of overflowing containers, they depict the body in various states of transformation, fragmentation, and struggle. Like all the other bodies in the exhibition, they embrace the complexity, hybridity, and the blurring of boundaries as we navigate contemporary existence. They question traditional categories and embrace a more nuanced, fluid, and open-ended view of ourselves on a quest toward a future where bodies can let go of their resistance.