

PRESS

26.09.2020

→ 03.01.2021

POSSESSED

MO.CO.PANACÉE



**MO.CO.MONTPELLIER
CONTEMPORAIN**

**WWW.MOCO.ART
#DESTINATIONCULTURE**

**PRESS
RELEASE**

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POSSESSED

DEVIANCE,

PERFORMANCE,

RESISTANCE

MO.CO.PANACÉE

PRESS VISIT

FRIDAY

25.09.2020. 2PM

OPENING

FRIDAY

25.09.2020. 7PM

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***Possessed* is a multidisciplinary exhibition that brings together over 25 international artists. It explores the relationship between resistant or excluded bodies and esoterisms: a means to reappropriate and perform feminist, queer or decolonial identities.**

Necromancy and spiritism, divination (astrology, fortune-telling, palmistry), magic and alchemy (spells, potions, elixirs) are among those gestures and rituals whose force springs forth from a body in movement. The occult only acquires meaning through performance. It is banished bodies that seize hold of such acts. The occult is the science of deviant bodies. It is necessary to be excluded and, in return, to exclude oneself from social, religious or economic norms in order to become a witch or a voodoo priest, to converse with spirits and let oneself be carried away by them. In this sense, the occult sets itself up as resistance against dogma, patriarchy, dominant powers, religions, accepted knowledge systems: in other words, the majority. By its nature, it is that which is hidden and other. It is that which reveals.

This associative chain (deviance-performance-resistance) explains why and how a new generation of artists reclaims the occult for itself. The body of the occult is one that is gendered, racialised and politicised.

The exhibition considers feminist, queer and decolonial positions and the manner in which artists reclaim with pride certain figures. The witch, the voodoo priest, spirits become guardians of visions of an alternative world, cast to the side but who remain resistant in the night of the occult.

The racialised, subjected body is at the heart of Dominique White's monumental installations whose symbolic materials, having been altered by the sea, the wind and the artist herself, invoke histories of slavery and of the Middle Passage. It is the phantoms of those bodies who were thrown into the sea that reappear. In Sedrick Chisom's phantasmagorical paintings, contemporary images taken from Black Lives Matter fuse with figures issuing forth from Western mythology and medieval Christian iconography in order to bring forth the history of colonisations and the memory of subjected bodies.

Kelly Akashi's sculpted self-portraits, Jean-Marie Appriou's bestiary and Nils Alix-Tabeling's furniture set, with its anthropomorphic forms, as well as Anna Hulačová's sculptures, all bewitch by the alchemical transformations that the materials they use – glass, bronze, wood – succumb to. The single, post-menopausal woman – an emblematic symbol of witchcraft and one of the major victims of the witch hunts – becomes the protagonist in Pauline Curnier-Jardin's film, in which the artist celebrates the aging body's sensuality and right to sexual desire and pleasure. The witch re-emerges in works by Nandipha Mntambo and Laura Gozlan. Apolonia Sokol creates a new painting: a reinterpretation of Botticelli's *Primavera* with trans figures. The div, an evil spirit that provokes pain and destruction, haunts the drawings of M. Mahdi Hamed Hâssanzada, an Afghan artist living in exile whose work refers to the fight for and affirmation of a queer identity, one that is banned in his native country.

The exhibition once more allows MO.CO. to offer direct support to artists through the production of a large number of new works, in particular those of Montpellier-based artists Nicolas Aguirre, Jimmy Richer and Chloé Viton, as well as French and international artists, including Raphaël Barontini, Lewis Hammond, Jean-Baptiste Janisset, Paul Maheke, or Apolonia Sokol. Through all these works, possession is simultaneously metaphor and a visceral experience.

Possessed brings together sculpture, video, painting, installation. It is further activated by performances that take place within an architectural scenography designed by Mr. & Mr., and a lighting design by Serge Damon, in which the visitor becomes the main actor of a quasi-cinematographic experience.

A full programme of performances, talks and screenings will complete the exhibition. *Possessed* has a particular resonance with the history of Montpellier, a city known for its history and tradition tied to the Faculty of Medicine, which in 2020 celebrates its 800th anniversary.

A richly illustrated, bilingual catalogue, published by Silvana Editoriale and designed by Atelier Tout va bien, brings together specially commissioned contextual essays and critical texts. An essay by Marianne Derrien adopts a transhistorical approach to discuss magic and expand upon the themes introduced by the exhibition. In addition, a plurality of voices offer a critical analysis of each artist's work, with texts by Camille Bardin, Margaux Bonopera, Giulia Civardi, Thomas Conchou, Julie Crenn, Chris Cyrille, Cédric Fauq, Caroline Honorien, Eliel Jones, Ingrid Luquet-Gad, Flora Katz, Franklin Melendez, Pedro Morais, Taddeo Reinhardt and Barbara Sirieix.

Artists : Nicolas Aguirre, Kelly Akashi, Nils Alix-Tabeling, Jean-Marie Appriou, Raphaël Barontini, Sedrick Chisom, Pauline Curnier-Jardin, Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard, Laura Gozlan, Lewis Hammond, M. Mahdi Hamed Hâssanzada, Anna Hulačová, Jean-Baptiste Janisset, Joachim Koester, Paul Maheke, Pierre Molinier, Myriam Mihindou, Nandipha Mntambo, Antonio Obá, Jimmy Richer, Apolonia Sokol, Chloé Viton, Dominique White. With performances and works presented off-site by Pierre Huyghe, Latifa Laâbissi, Luara Learth Moreira, Perez.

Curators: Vincent Honoré, Director of Exhibitions MO.CO., with Caroline Chabrand, Curator MO.CO., and Anya Harrison, Curator MO.CO., assisted by Laureen Picaut, Intern MO.CO.

MONTPELLIER CONTEMPORAIN : AN ART INSTITUTION THREE SITES.

Montpellier Contemporain (MOCO) is an arts ecosystem, ranging from practical training through to the act of collecting. The model encompasses an arts school and two exhibition centres: MO.CO. Esba (Montpellier Art School), MO.CO.Panacée (Contemporary Arts Centre) and MO.CO.Hôtel des collections, an exhibition centre dedicated to international collections.

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