

BRICKS GALLERY PROUDLY PRESENTS

I'm Ago

A SOLO EXHIBITION BY SIGNE RALKOV

Opening: Friday October 29, 2021. 5 - 8 p.m.

Exhibition period: October 30 - November 20 2021.

Referring to both the latin word for image and the final stage of an insect's development, the word "imago" suggests a world of shifting impressions and both organic and digital transformations. For *I'm Ago* Copenhagen-based artist Signe Ralkov (b. 1997, Denmark) taps into ideas of becoming and considers how growing up surrounded by streams of images shapes our presence in the world.

Combining a sense of nostalgia with the appearance of digital imaging technology, here we have works that feel as much like mythological illustrations as they do cropped screenshots or a desktop folder filled with pond imagery.

Best known for her pale blue figurative drawings, Signe Ralkov first developed this style as a nod to the early photographic method, cyanotype, and the cyan-coloured photos it produces. Similarly, the relationship between this faded aesthetic and the sun-bleached appearance that photographic prints take on over time has been a visual effect that Ralkov has deliberately embraced.

Through reference to outdated technology and observations of sun, the artist foregrounds the important connection between chemistry and image production in her practice. When looking at these drawings I find myself wondering how the images I consume everyday interact with and maybe alter the chemical make-up of my body. At the same time I get the sense that Ralkov is suggesting that all art comes from a process of sustained chemical development over time. In a work like *Jawpool* (2021) we seem to get a glimpse into the swampy inner world where this development takes place. Here new ideas soak in the internal developing fluid of the artist's imagination before shapes and colours can begin to form.

In works like *Sistershifters* (2021) Ralkov engages with the history of folklore narratives. Here we see the artist's retelling of the Swan Maiden, a tale about a mythic hybrid swan-human who is tricked by an admirer to live as a human. Ralkov re-writes this narrative through a mixture of digital collaging and hand-drawing. We are presented with a contemporary version of the medieval character - one who continues to live with her swan-siblings and is not forced by the narrative to

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sacrifice in-betweenness for a “fixed” identity.

In the same way that Ralkov plays with our sense of time to question the distance between the past and our present, she uses depictions of water and water-based plantlife to close the gap we may perceive between our own bodies and those of others. In Ralkov’s world rootsystems become biological internet fibre cables, connecting people to the natural world, and in-turn to the bodies of other people. In works like *Currentbody* (2021), *When you seep* (2021) and *Pond’s pulse* (2021) we encounter bodies in suspension, floating in water or submerged beneath its surface. Physical characteristics that seem easy to identify disappear as bodies merge with the water or fuse with the lily pads floating on its surface.

In Ralkov’s world there is a sense of solidarity in this hybridity. You get a sense that all bodies, human, animal or of water are charged with the potential to develop and that new shapes and images might be continuously produced by the chemistry that fuels this process. In this respect, the “imago” or the idea of a final visual stage is an impossibility. Instead it must be replaced by “I’m Ago,” or the idea that the closest I can come to recognizing myself, is as the person I just was, as I continue to transform and forever take on new shapes.

Signe Ralkov is currently studying at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. The artist’s recent exhibition history includes: “Eve presents” at Eve Leibe Gallery (London UK, 2021), “Shedding Season” at Gallery Steinsland Berliner (Stockholm SE, 2020) “TWENTYFOUR II” at Bricks Gallery (Copenhagen DK, 2020), “Tales of Mere Existence” at Bricks Gallery (Copenhagen DK, 2020) and “No Scrubs” at HotDock Project Space (Bratislava SK, 2019).

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I'm Ago

BY NANNA STORR-HANSEN

I

*Vandet gør ikke modstand, men jeg først drømte jeg om eng senere tørv en å
fandt mig den tredje nat jeg trådte vande i et dyb herfra slugte mange
alger mig min søvn blev tæt befolket*

II

*En snegl spinder sin slim ved bredden hver morgen på samme måde
vandnymfer har også søvn sønnen delt i få faser en græstynd membran
adskiller dem tillader små bevægelser*

III

*Mine vinger de er små de er ikke til besvær hestehove hilste på mig
sagde jeg lød som kirkeklokker en vild varme fylder mig nu
en uendelig kjole*

IV

*Bladbærende blomsterbærende røddermod mit bryst jeg har ingen ord
for hvad jeg så nu hvor mine fingre hænger sammen et tydeligt
slægtskab får os hurtigere frem gennem vandet liljer legeroven over*

V

*Flokken udvides af og til jeg har glemt hvor jeg kom fra i vandet kan
jeg se men ikke skrive eller tale det er min pligt at flyve højt vandkorpen rakte ud
efter mig harpehænder vingebeben ildblå svanemåne*