



Grossi Maglioni: *Occupazioni: The Split Child*, 2019, pillows, textiles, iron, detail installation view at Hungarian Academy in Rome, photo: Sebastiano Luciano

GROSSI MAGLIONI: Beast Mother

The new exhibition project by the Italian duo Grossi Maglioni, created for Kunsthalle LAB, focuses on the examination of motherhood and its transformative potential. It centres on the persona of the mother with instinctive wild attributes, who protects her children and in the course of this action becomes a horrifying figure.

Curator: Lýdia Pribišová

Duration: 11. 3. 2021 – 25. 4. 2021

Venue: Kunsthalle LAB

Beast Mother is a project that takes its departure from several lines of thought: postfeminist and anthropological discourse, psychoanalytic writing, sci-fi literature and film and associated theory and analysis, as well as the artists' own experience of motherhood and their interactions in a group of mothers and children. The project centres on the mother and child couple, the child's maturing, and its journey towards independence from the mother.

"*Grossi Maglioni examine the iconography linked with motherhood as something frightful, where majesty and horror overlap in the image of the mother. Their research has a rich imaginarium to draw on: from prehistoric ideas in which the female body fuses with animal and plant elements, through ancient mythology and magic, all the way to the visions of sci-fi,*" Lýdia Pribišová, the project's curator, observes.

The core of the exhibition in Kunsthalle LAB is *Occupazioni: The Perpetual Dialogue*, a story which the artists have developed over time in groups of mothers and children, during a series of meetings and workshops in Rome, Novi Sad and elsewhere. One can hear it in the course of the exhibition and read it in the exhibited publication.

The installation consists of two opposing environments, arenas for two chapters of the story. The darker, gloomier setting represents the cave, the lodge of caring, a kind of archetypal dwelling. It is an agreeable refuge, defined anew at the end of the story as a mobile nomadic place shared with a community. The brighter environment represents emptiness, nothingness, the desert of the story, but after contact with the human being it too springs to life and blossoms.

From the oldest times, stories have had magical healing power. This tale, presented in the glass-fronted exhibition space, tells of a mother and her child, who has been transformed in the course of development and has undergone a ritual initiation process.

“In the current situation, when because of the pandemic children and their parents must relinquish many things they need and are spending more time together than is usual, it is very important to strengthen the capacity to create strong and supportive bonds and to experience mutual closeness. To make tools for themselves, in order to cope successfully with critical situations,” Lýdia Pribišová says.

GROSSI MAGLIONI (Francesca Grossi and Vera Maglioni, *1982, Rome) began their collaboration in 2006. They work with performative, theatrical and participative principles and create site-specific installations and workshops. They take their starting points from findings in anthropology and gender studies, and also from borrowed elements of popular culture such as sci-fi, cabaret, and so on. In recent times, they have focused on educational projects and work with the child viewer and parents. Grossi Maglioni’s work has been exhibited in galleries, museums and academic institutions, including: Accademia di Ungheria, Rome (IT); Novo Kulturno Naselje, Novi Sad (RS); Istituto Svizzero, Rome (IT); AlbumArte, Rome (IT); American Academy, Rome (IT); Viafarini, Milan (IT); MACRO Museum, Rome (IT); Verkstad för konst, Norrköping (SW); ERBA Ecole Régionale des Beaux Arts de Besançon (FR); Konstall Museum, Vasa (FI). They have participated in a number of residencies, among which: Magic Carpets Residency, Novi Sad (RS); Rupextre, residency for artists and anthropologists, Matera (IT); Svenska konstskolan, Nykarleby (FI). From 2008 to 2014, the duo has been part of the international research platform for performance arts, science and technologies Vision Forum, based in Sweden.

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Grossi Maglioni: *Occupazioni: The Observing Child, 2021*, mixed fabrics, photo: Sebastiano Luciano