



My Perversion is the Belief in Art

Ellen Cantor, Miriam Cahn, Luciano Castelli, Alba S. Enström, Rainer Fetting, Andrea Éva Győri, Viljami Heinonen, Eeva Peura, Mercedes Sturm-Lie, Marianna Uutinen, Amalia Vekri, Alisa Yoffe

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Curators: Martin Schibli and Saara Karhunen

The exhibition title is a playful reference to a quote from the late artist **Ellen Cantor** (1961–2013): “My perversion is the belief in true love”. It encapsulates a paradox shared by many artists: while adopting a critical approach, they nevertheless still believe in the energy of artistic practice, they are still romantics, they still believe in love and the power of Art. Cantor worked in several media, she could be provocative – but often with a good measure of humour. Her work revolved around present-day culture, society and politics, yet more fundamentally it was about life itself, about passion and the struggle to survive as a human being in a world of complicated uncertainty.

The renewed interest in Cantor’s work in recent years comes as no surprise. There has been a strong wish among artists to regain the autonomy and power of art, and a desire to avoid being interpreted from the standpoint of specific theoretical frameworks. Instead they wish to maintain and express the energy of art itself. This desire to restore the autonomy of art may have been strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the shutdown comes a natural need for something new and fresh that does not hark back to the situation before the pandemic. It is time once again to believe in the power of art itself.

The exhibition brings together artists from different generations and backgrounds. Artists who are interested not in the latest theories but in underground culture, poets, punk, life, passion, fashion magazines, pornographic magazines, popular film references... All featured artists address the struggle of being human, of finding an orientation in the here and now. They all bring energy into their art, with few or no compromises. Their determination to embrace both life and art can be seen as a harbinger of a better future.

The show features two videos by Ellen Cantor: *Barbie London* (2001) examines the woman’s role in the form of a wild tale about a Barbie doll, while the posthumously discovered *If I Just Turn and Run* (1998) explores sexuality and desire in the intimate diary-like style favoured by Cantor. **Miriam Cahn** (b. 1949, Switzerland) presents intensely colourful paintings on the themes of death, feminism and human struggle. Since the 1970s, **Luciano Castelli** (b. 1951, Switzerland) has used painting, photography and video to depict himself in costumes that test the boundaries of narrowly defined gender roles. Castelli has a link to punk culture, as does **Alisa Yoffe** (b. 1987, Russia), whose background comes through in the monumental digital drawing she created specifically for this exhibition. **Andrea Éva Győri** (b. 1985, Hungary) explores corporeality through her own body and illness. Finnish artists in the show are **Viljami Heinonen** (b. 1986), **Eeva Peura** (b. 1983) and **Marianna Uutinen** (b. 1961).

The exhibition is produced in partnership with: acb Galéria, Electronic Arts Intermix, The Estate of Ellen Cantor, Galerie Forsblom, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Harlan Levey Projects, Kuopio Art Museum, MAKASIINI Contemporary, Triumph Gallery

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