

Combining Through

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Lea Culetto

GALERIJA ŠKUC

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Lasje. Cenjeni, dokler so živi. Dokler rastejo na ustreznih delih telesa. Zaželeni, dokler so ustreznne barve, strukture, gostote, pravilne oblike in dolžine. Dokler so ukročeni. Dokler ne izpadajo. Mrtvi so nezaželeni. Vzbujajo neprijetne občutke, sram in celo gnuš. Z izjemo namerno odstranjenev. Prvi odrezan koder otroških las v spominski knjigi. Pramen las odstotne ljubljene osebe v medaljonu. Postanejo predmet, ki presega materialno telo. Spomin z DNK. Talisman.

– Lea Culetto

Razstava *Combing Through* (Prečesana) predstavlja najnovejši projekt Lee Culetto, v katerem se ukvarja z družbeno-kulturnim pomenom las in poraščenosti. S feministične perspektive raziskuje zgodovino las in njihovo dvojnost – hraki živi in mrtvi, cenjeni in nagnusni – pri tem pa odkriva mite in narative, v katerih so lasje simbolizirali moč ter identiteto, a še pogosteje služili nadzoru ženskega telesa, ki je moralno (in še vedno mora) ustrezati patriarhalnim normam lepotе in podrejenosti.

Na steni v preddverju nas v razstavo uvede pesem avstralske umetnice Michele Elliot o ženski, morda dekletu, z debelo, bogato kito las, ki se zdi polna življenja. Vendar se v to predstavo prikrade zla slutinja, strah pred preroščimi sanjam, v katerih se kita prelevi v kačo, ki imetnico kite zadavi. Prav takšno dvojnost je mogoče zaznati tudi v mitologiji. Boginje in nimfe svojo moč nemalokrat črapajo iz svojih dolgih las, obenem pa so ravno lasje njihova šibka točka, ki jo izkoristijo tako bogovi kot smrtniki, ko se jih poskušajo polasti. Boginje opajajo njihove moči oziroma disciplinirajo, tako da jih ostrizejo, nadzorujejo pa jih s samo grožnjo izgube las. Na drugi strani sobe je postavljen šop trnovih vej, povezanih z verigo iz polstenih umetničnih las, ki je v mitih pogosto izmenljiva s kito.

V prvi sobi na levi umetnica predstavi svoje izsledke raziskovanja mitologije in zgodovine las v obliku velikega ozvezdja – miselnega vzorca. Vsako zvezdo na steni zaseda določen pojem, posamezne zvezde pa Culetto med seboj povezuje glede na pojavnost tega pojma v različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih ter mitih. *Lasje* nas na primer peljejo do *simbolizma* in *zgodbi*, naprej do *mitov in boginj*, od tu pa do *Dali*, gruzijske boginje z zlatimi lasmi, sijočimi kot sonce. Miselnemu vzorcu lahko natančneje sledimo prek QR kode. Na zaslonu se nam odpre ozvezdje, kjer so posamezni pojmi obogateni s citati ali spletnimi povezavami, ki jih razlagajo. V tem delu torej Culetto mapira svoj raziskovalno-ustvarjalni proces, več motivov iz konstelacije, od verige in votivne lutke do bioplastike in nakita iz las, pa razvija tudi v drugih razstavljenih delih.

Stene naslednje sobe so okrašene z neskončnim motivom verige in trnja, bodečega kot dlake, ki poganjajo po britju. Pogled in korak nas vodita k ogledalu na tleh, ki aludira na jezera, ob katerih si v bajkah vle češajo svoje dolge čarobne lase. Nanj je položena verižica iz bioperl. Ker so sveže izdelane, bodo med razstavo še spreminjač svojo obliko in barvo zaradi sušenja in drugih naravnih procesov. Umetnica jih izdeluje iz alginata, kot naravno barvilo pa

pogosto uporablja svoje zmlete žgane lase. Ker razpadajo izredno počasi, so lasje naša vez z minljivostjo – nikit iz las je ena od najbolj intimnih oblik spominjanja ljubljjenih oseb. V sentimentalnem duhu viktorijanske dobe je bil takšen žalni nikit še posebej prijubljen. Pojavljali so se tudi venci, spleteni iz pokojnikovih las, in podobna umetelna dela specializiranih rokodelcev. Še dandanes ostaja koder las v medaljonu način, kako draga oseba za vedno obdržimo blizu.

Sanjsko vzdružje sobe, kjer sta na ogled njena videa, ustvari Culetto s projekcijo na prosojne zavezke, ki jih je sešila sama. Poleg trajnostnih tehnologij je namreč vešča tudi ročnih spremnosti in obrti, ki so tradicionalno veljale za ženska opravila, s tem pa manjvredna. V prvem videoju si sledijo mikroskopske povečave las in dlakave kožje, posnetki strženja in zvoti epilatorja, prikaz postopkov izdelave bioperlic z lasnim pigmentom vse do končane gnuš. Izbujajo neprijetne občutke, sram in celo gnuš. Z izjemo namerno odstranjenev. Prvi odrezan koder otroških las v spominski knjigi. Pramen las odstotne ljubljene osebe v medaljonu. Postanejo predmet, ki presega materialno telo. Spomin z DNK. Talisman.

V največji sobi se med zavesami mimo trnja (risba z lastnim črnim), čopicev, spominčice (vezenina iz las) in sfriziranih kosmatih nog (sitolitska) sprehodimo po glavnega hišnega olтарja. Sestavljen je iz masivnega lesenega ogledala, majhne lutke iz blaga z lasmi umetnice, bioperli v predmetov umetničnega ustvarjalnega procesa. Lutka je kuhinjska čarownica, ki po nekaterih severoevropskih šegah čuva domače ognjišče in odganja zle duhove. Predmete Culetto uporablja v receptih za izdelavo bioperli, ki po natančnosti postopkov spominjajo na čarovniške uroke. Čarovniškemu etosu sobivanja z naravo se v svojem umetniškem delovanju približuje tudi zavestno rabo rabičnih materialov, recimo zaves in ostalega blaga na razstavi. Predvsem pa sodobne čarovniške prakse povezuje s feminističnimi pogledi na svobodo ženskega telesa in duha ter grajenju skupnosti, ki daje velik pomen spiritualnosti, sodelovanju, odgovornosti, predaji znanja in veselju kot obliki odpora.

Urška Aplinc in Lara Plavčak

Michele Elliot je Australian artist and occasional writer whose practice spans sculpture, textile, drawing and installation. She lives and works in Woolloomooloo, Sydney.

Combing Through is Michele Elliot's latest work. It explores the relationship between hair and memory. The artist uses hair to create a series of performances that share a common theme: the connection between the body and the environment. The project is a response to the artist's own personal experiences with hair loss and the challenges it presents. The artist uses hair to explore the concept of memory and its connection to the body. The work is a reflection on the transient nature of memory and the way it changes over time. The artist uses hair to create a sense of intimacy and connection with the viewer. The work is a reminder of the fragility of memory and the importance of preserving it.



Combing Through

Hair. Valued as long as it is alive. As long as it grows on the right parts of the body. Desirable, as long as it has the right colour, texture, thickness, shape and length. As long as it is tamed. As long as it doesn't fall out. Undesirable when dead. It arouses unpleasant feelings, shame and even disgust. With the exception of the hairs that have been deliberately removed. The first curl of a child's hair in a memory book. A lock of hair of an absent loved one in a locket. These become objects that transcend the material body. A memory with DNA. A talisman.

– Lea Culetto

Combing Through is Lea Culetto's latest project, in which she explores the socio-cultural significance of hair and hairiness. From a feminist perspective, she explores the history of hair and its duality – simultaneously alive and dead, valued and loathed – uncovering myths and narratives in which hair symbolised power and identity, but was more often used to control the female body, which had (and still has) to conform to patriarchal norms of beauty and subordination.

On the wall in the entrance area, a poem by Australian artist Michele Elliot introduces us to the exhibition. It tells of a woman, or perhaps a girl, with a thick, luscious braid of hair that seems full of life. However, a sinister premonition creeps into this vision, a fear of the prophetic dreams in which the braid transforms into a snake that strangles its owner. Such duality can also be found in mythology. Goddesses and nymphs often derive their power from their long hair, yet at the same time, their hair is also their weakness, exploited by gods and mortals alike in their attempts to dominate them. Stripping them of their strength or subjugating them, they cut their hair, while even the mere threat of its loss becomes a means of control. On the other side of the space, a bundle of thorny branches is bound by a chain of the artist's felted hair, a material that is often interchangeable with the braid in myths.

In the first space on the left, the artist presents her findings from the exploration of the mythology and history of hair in the form of a large constellation – a mind map. Each star on the wall stands for a specific concept and Culetto interlinks the stars according to the occurrence of this concept in different historical epochs and myths. Hair, for instance, takes us to symbolism and stories, then to myths and goddesses, and from there to *Dali*, the Georgian goddess with golden hair that shines like the sun. The mind map can be explored in more detail via a QR code. A constellation opens on the screen, where each concept is enriched with quotes or web links that explain it. In this sense, Culetto maps her explorative and creative process, while several motifs in the constellation, from the chain and the votive doll to bioplastic and hair jewellery, are further developed in other works on display.

The walls of the next space are adorned with an endless motif of chains and thorns, bristling like hair sprouting after a shave. The glance and the step lead us to a mirror on the floor which alludes

Urška Aplinc and Lara Plavčak