

EVA FÀBREGAS AND PATRICIA PISANELLI

First Act: Smooth Operations

2 December 2017 - 3 February 2018

Private view Friday 1 December, 6pm - 8pm

Curated by Antoni Ferrer

First Act: Smooth Operations brings together new and recent works by London based artists Eva Fàbregas and Patricia Pisanelli, both of whom are concerned with the affective versus the subjective in the context of the so-called 'experience economy'. These works place the subject —the individual, the group— amidst the material culture we live in and investigate today's consumer society under conditions of advanced capitalism.

First Act: Smooth Operations is first and foremost an exhibition about strategies of engagement. The exhibition is about how the two exhibited artists negotiate a highly mediated reality and propose new forms of appreciation. Each artist is interested in seemingly disparate and non-extraordinary things such as processed food and the culture of wellness. For both artists, these environments are carefully engineered landscapes that function under their own logic. Far from formulating a straightforward critique, Pisanelli and Fàbregas fully appropriate these subjects and re-articulate their languages to pinpoint the engineered nature of desire and enjoyment.

Spanish artist Eva Fàbregas' work often portrays intimate stories of everyday objects that bear a special resonance. She formulates alternative readings on mundane things and investigates the less visible narratives that otherwise would go unnoticed. Taking inspiration from Bruno Latour's idea that human and non-human agents are part of the same sphere of existence, Fàbregas' interests lie in the principle that the material culture acts as a social agent through which our desires, emotions and affects are able to circulate. Within the capitalist context arises the idea of the object of desire that engenders a form of consumerism which is fuelled by the eternal promise of satisfaction. Here, Eva Fàbregas explores the engineering of desire and how it has progressively lost its human agency to become an autonomous force that directly flows through consumer objects.

Inspired by cultures of wellness, Fàbregas's 2017 work *Picture yourself as a block of melting butter* invites visitors to sit and engage themselves in a controlled environment designed to induce physical and mental states. The disembodied voice heard through the ASMR inspired audio piece takes audiences on an introspective journey where the fetish, the intimate and the mundane are interlocked, along with shapes, textures, colours and smells that all play a role in the sensual experience. Found in the downstairs video room is *The Role of Unintended Consequences - Sofa Compact* (2016), a 10 min animated video inspired by Charles and Ray Eames's economically constructed sofa furniture named 'Sofa Compact' and its accompanying commercial film 'S-73' — the earliest ready-to-assemble piece of furniture ever produced and which refers to the first commercial containership journey ever made. Fàbregas's work here touches upon how the Sofa Compact and its Modernist functionality foreshadowed elements within late-capitalist logic.

Patricia Pisanelli's body of work is made up primarily by small scale sculptures that elegantly swing between the familiar and the foreign. The Brazilian artist's carefully crafted three dimensional works often make reference to mass processed edible products and other forms of artificiality. Inspired by Baudrillard's idea of the *simulacrum* and the idea that the copy loses its ties with its original over time, and which eventually takes it over to create the hyperreal. Following this, processed food can be acknowledged not as food *per se* but as a fully autonomous construct that transgresses the original functions of food. It is in this context where Patricia finds all the conceptual and aesthetic elements she needs to develop a productive artistic

practice based on material manipulation and exaggeration. Notions of absurdity, desire and repulsion are tangled up and negotiated in a way that results in works that absorb the irrationality inherent in the processed food industry. Patricia Pisanelli's seductive aesthetics lays bare a space where DIY materials such as plaster and foam perversely point back to much of the synthetic ingredients employed in processed food.

Central to Patricia Pisanelli's artistic practice lays the question of how images are read. Taking on a semiotic approach, the artist seeks to provoke a moment of initial confusion that allows her to investigate ideas of misinterpretation. *Gastro Emulsions* (2015), for instance, presents a selection of small scale sculptures graciously distributed along the wall that only after a closer inspection reveal their true DIY nature. What's more, the well-proportioned slicing encountered throughout her work references a well-versed marketing gesture widely used in food industries to entice consumers. *22 Cubes of Mayo and a Mayo Cube* (2015) takes this a step further by adopting techniques of minimalist seriality to divide, categorise and question the product's authenticity. The small furniture floor sculptures entitled *What floats in front of you flows inside of me* (2017) show mutated signs of processed food and veer into a fantastical and 'down the rabbit hole' type world. These hybrids take on the idea that processed food very often tries to be something that it is not and point to a form of logic that has ceased to be rational because it cannot be measured against any ideal. Adjacent to this, the perspex wall works entitled *Correcting the Lasagne* (2017) depict a series of diagrams representing different ways of preparing lasagne as specified by anonymous online food forum's users. Here the artist codes their text-based recipes into a visual system and highlights the ways language is used by each of them to highlight his/her own recipe.

Eva Fàbregas (b 1988, Barcelona, Spain) lives and works in London UK. She completed an MA in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London in 2013. Recent solo and duo exhibitions include, *Picture yourself as a block of melting butter*, Fundació Miró, Barcelona, 2017; *Systems for displaying matter, Enclave*, London, 2016; *The stuff that surrounds us*, José de la Fuente, Santander, 2016; *How are you feeling today?*, Window Space, Whitechapel, London, 2015; *Unforeseen changes*, The Green Parrot, Barcelona, 2014.

Patricia Pisanelli (b.1981, Sao Paul, Brazil) lives and works in London and completed her MA Fine Arts at Central Saint Martins in 2013. Recent exhibitions include, *4.42*, 5th Base Gallery, London, 2017; *Window 71*, Site specific, Tottenham, London, 2017; *Fridges Fight Back*, Bompas & Parr at KK Outlet, London, 2016; *North & Found*, Art Licks Weekend, London, 2015; *Hix Award 2015*, Cock'n'Bull Gallery, London, 2015; *Jabberwocky*, Ab/Anbar, Tehran, 2015; *I'm not done II*, Guest Projects, London, 2015; *I'm not done*, Islington Arts Factory, London, 2014.

Antoni Ferrer (b. 1985, Spain) is a London-based curator. In 2012 he started the curatorial platform *Curare* and has worked with numerous arts organisations, public institutions and galleries including Galerie Isabella Czarnowska, Berlin; Wallace Collection; Vegas gallery; P3 Ambika; Trajector Art Fair, Brussels, Belgium. He regularly contributes to the Dutch Pop-Up Cultural Project and Spain NOW!. Recent exhibitions include: *Hollandaise*, New Art Projects, London, 2016; *Adrián Navarro + Silvia Lerín: New Work*, 12 Star Gallery, London, 2016; *WTF - Gala Knorr*, Total Refreshment Centre, London, 2015.

With thanks to DRF Rubber Flooring for the kind support of Patricia Pisanelli's work.