

28 September | 11 November, 2023

For her second exhibition at ADA, Anna Perach presents a series of new sculptural works created during her residency project at the Castello San Basilio, Pisticci (MT), in summer 2023.

In the past two years, Anna Perach's research has focused on the history of witchcraft and how it was demonised during the period of the Enlightenment by debilitating women and restricting them to the domestic space. Within this research Perach has been looking at 17th century anatomical Venus sculptures, made for medical use. The Anatomical Venus is depicted as passive and at the disposal of the male practitioner to disassemble and construct at will. A similar approach to the female body appeared 200 years later in the psychiatric work of Jean-Martin Charcot at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, who treated women diagnosed with hysteria. Charcot performed the infamous Tuesday lectures where he would hypnotise his female patients to reveal their convoluting bodies in front of an audience of male physicians.

The female body has thus been perceived by the scientific authority as a body external to moral and natural rules. A body that needs to be relieved of its demonic nature, either by dissecting it, as in the case of the anatomical Venus, or by making it docile and obedient as in the treatment of hysteria under hypnosis.

The works in the show represent mystical and obscene female bodies made by tufting, a hand-made carpet making technique associated with femininity and domesticity. In *Untitled*, the tufting patterns are inspired by female anatomy, revealing muscle and bone, with the wooden frame, which transforms into ceramic hands, acting as the skeleton. The two framed works metaphorically question the morality of boundaries. *Dismembered Venus* and *The Hysteric*, respectively, are inspired by archetypal and historical sources, where the female body appears fractured or accompanied by bestial presences.

Anna Perach engages with these histories through the depiction of characters that subvert the dictatorship of reason. Her characters inhabit the uncomfortable space of between, inside, and outside of their bodies. These bodies are in transition and transformation, disobeying the boundaries of the self as an impenetrable unit and by metaphor the boundaries of societal rules.

Anna Perach (1985, Ukraine) lives and works in London, UK. She holds an MFA in fine art (distinction) from Goldsmiths, University of London (2020).

Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include: 2024 – Gasworks, London, UK (upcoming); The Lightbox Museum, London, UK (upcoming). 2023 – ADA, Rome, IT; Almasan gallery, with Gaston Zvi Ickowicz, Jaffa, Israel. 2022 – Edel Assanti, London, UK. 2021 – Cookelatham gallery, two person show with Anousha Payne, London, UK; Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel, IL; ADA, Rome, IT.

Recent and upcoming group exhibitions include: 2023 – Arnolfini, Bristol, UK; Goldsmiths CCA, London, UK; Richard Saltoun, London, UK; Hales Gallery, London, UK; Rugby Art Gallery and Museum, curated by Marcelle Joseph, Rugby, UK. 2021 – Royal Society of Sculptors, London, UK; Vitrine gallery, Basel, CH; The Ryder Projects, Madrid, ES. 2020 – Centrale Fies, Trento, IT; Larsen Warner gallery, Stockholm, SWE; White Cube, online exhibition, London, UK. 2019 – MOSTYN, Llandudno, Wales, UK; Mimosa House, London, UK.

In 2020 she received a studio award with Sarabande, The Lee Alexander McQueen foundation as well as the Gilbert Bayes award. In the same year, Anna Perach was awarded a grant for the production of new work from Procreate Project via the Arts Council England. In 2021 she has been awarded the Ingram Prize, London and in 2022 the Carol Rama Award by Fondazione Sardi per l'Arte, Turin.