

3 + 1

Three Colours: Green

Evy Jokhova

11.11.22 – 07.01.23

Opening, 11.11.22, 18h – 21h

Each living thing is not singular, but rather a plurality; even so far as it appears to us as an individual, nevertheless it remains an assembly of autonomous living things, that according to the idea, according to the display, are equal, but when they manifest they can be equal or similar, unequal or dissimilar. Originally, these beings are in part already united, in part they meet and gather. They separate and seek each other again, bringing an infinite production in every way and in every direction.¹

J. W. von Goethe

*Gone
Into the rain today
Wet fields of green
No I don't stay long
You always find me
(...)
You can chase me
I'm only seeing green²*

Abraham Marder

Let us start by thinking of a journey that is set between what we came to conceive, with the passage of time and through the various manifestations of faith and human belief, as hell and paradise, or darkness and light, two places that in our human imagination may come to await us in the afterlife. There have been many authors that thought about and went through this journey; among them, Dante and Goethe. So, we know that hell is a place of suffering, desperation and punishment; in turn, paradise is a place of happiness and hope. More than qualifying them as places that we are waiting for, to think about the feelings that characterize these places are to reflect upon something that concerns us, human beings, very intimately: the worries, laments and mourning that afflict us, or to the fortune, the happiness, and the joy that we relish during our lives. The notion of “hell” is the daily translation of the exhaustion, sometimes boredom, torments, anguishes, defeats and disappointments we experience, whereas “paradise” is the translation of an expectation of something harder to reach, an arduous task to accomplish, but in which we recognize the possibility of happening, intimately and deeply, in precious and unforgettable moments; when we share a moment with someone we love very much, or in a reunion when a long embrace makes missing someone a faded thought, or when genuine laughter is shared among friends, or tender tears when faced with someone else’s happiness, or when dreams, desires, and hopes are fulfilled. It becomes clear that the feeling we can express as “hell” is mainly experienced in isolation, a feeling of helplessness that reveals itself only to us, even if we are not alone, whereas “paradise” is experienced, above all, in the sharing that happens and that we conquer with and among other people.

¹ J. W. von Goethe, “Metamorphosis of Plants”.

² “Green”: original music by Abraham Marder for the film “Sound of Metal” (2019), by Darius Marder.

3 + 1

About this journey, which we have found does not concern only a path beyond life but above all the path taken during life itself, there is a very ancient tale that is told in the form of a parable, the story of a man who travelled to the land of “suffering” and the land of “happiness”.

When this man reaches the land of “suffering”, he comes across a long table where a sumptuous meal is being served. This setting seems unbelievable, even strange, as there does not seem to be any type of suffering or misfortune there, as one had hoped to find. Only a rich and abundant table, full of delicacies. The man starts to pay attention to the inhabitants of this land that are beginning to gather around the table. With a famished expression on their faces and with mal nourished bodies, they pick up peculiar and bizarre utensils to use during the meal. These are very long spoons, difficult to handle. That is when everyone starts to reach for the most delectable foods, fighting with each other to get the best delicacies. But they eagerly try to get the spoons up to their mouths, the food falls, depriving them of the nourishment. While they keep fighting this intense and intermittent struggle to feed themselves, the anguish and fear of the visitor watching this scene keeps rising and rising. He then decides to head to the land of happiness. There, he finds exactly the same table with exactly the same banquet. Disturbed with what he had just witnessed, watching the inhabitants of this land arriving and calmly gathering and sitting down around the table, he thought that he should immediately warn them that they would not be able to eat because of the long utensils, therefore embarking on a new tragic and disastrous struggle. However, just as he was about to address them, an unexpected phenomenon arose: the inhabitants picked up the enormous cutlery and carried the food to each other's mouths, delighting themselves with the various dishes of the banquet. This way, they could reach and eat these wonderful delicacies, overcoming their own greed, and celebrating the relationship with other people besides the one they have with themselves. Together, they shared the simple delight of a meal.

As Hannah Arendt stated, “Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves.”³ That is the quality of human plurality, the condition that is accomplished “because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live.”⁴ The meaning attributed to things in the world we share, and the meaning we find in human endeavours, tangible or intangible, depends entirely on this plurality, Arendt tells us, this condition that is recognised through our actions and that makes us interdependent on each other, an intricate web of human relationships, in this world that welcomes us and that we share. This mesh of relationships that is generated, “no less bound to the objective world of things than speech is to the existence of a living body”, that happens “wherever men live together”, and that adopts our human condition in its many activities, is specifically the engine that depending on manifested human wills, desires, intentions and objectives, allows the production of *stories*, to be understood and celebrated, throughout time.

It is through a recreation of the story, of the tale, that we mentioned before, that Evy Jokhova proposes that we think about the fact that only that if we are aware with this plurality and interdependence with others, can we reach happiness.

At the beginning of 2022, Evy Jokhova shared her days with indigenous people from the amazon rainforest of Peru, the community Shipibo-Konibo. She shared with this community their daily rituals, ceremonies and rites, their beliefs and skills. As if treading new paths in ancestral times, where hands are par excellence the beginning of the original interpretation and knowledge of the world, nature and its phenomena – we should remind ourselves that the first human manifestations on record are the handprints painted on the walls of deep caves, the hands of

³ Hannah Arendt, “The Human Condition”, The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

⁴ *Ibidem*

3 + 1

someone that touched the rock and recorded their existence this way. Evy Jokhova was invited to get to know the multiplicity of approaches in ceramics, weaving and embroidery, shared and taught by the members of this community. Using her hands, mimicking their gestures as if appealing for knowledge, the artist created a body of work that reveals to us, very intimately, the knowledge and the manifestations of being human that seem so distant to us today. Primal gestures connected to earth, water, time and to the places of a virgin world, original and pure, upon which we still have the respect and eternal admiration for its constant metamorphosis.

The result of these gestures that bring the knowledge of the world are images made with vigilant eyes, created by embroidered lines, or by hands that delicately hold small fairies, as if one was trying not to let desires escape. There are figures that come from dreams and indistinct fears, or another person's recorded memories, invoked and drawn on small pieces of paper. There are thoughts made of geometric and labyrinth-like paths dyed on fabric, hands that go up to the sky, looking for the sun and the moon. There are also hands made of fabric of the colour of leaves, treetops, streams and early morning sky, showing the connection to the earth, to the roots, to a common world. Very tall stems, plants and animals metamorphosed into porous or glazed ceramic material. Three photographs coexist with them: they are pores of plants or pores of our own skin; sharp thorns or fiery moods; a pool with greenish water, still, reflecting the cleanness of the sky and the dark shapes of the trees beyond it or, possibly, a mirror that reflects the sky and earth of which we are part of, yet which we are almost always absorbed, distracted, alienated from; a mirror that shows us that our condition of plurality can only exist as long as there is a world that houses us and unites us.

It is this feeling of plurality intrinsic to our existence, of self-search and of meeting the other, that is established in this exhibition by Evy Jokhova. Here, we can hear soft echoes and clear reflections of a place that always unites and invites us to rethink our own place in it, our dependence on others, the intrinsic necessity to share experiences and stories ready to be told and retold, this way fulfilling the celebration of the mysteries of our human condition in this world.

Filipa Correia de Sousa, 11.2022

Evy Jokhova (Switzerland, 1984 - EE/UK/RU) lives and works between Lisbon, London, and Vienna. Jokhova is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice engages with dialogue and relationships between social anthropology, architecture, philosophy and art. Working with drawing, sculpture, installation, sound, film and performance, she aims to bridge gaps between these fields and their inherent hierarchical structures. A graduate of MA Fine Art, Royal College of Art (2011) and MA Political Communications, (2013) Goldsmiths College, Jokhova is the recipient of numerous awards including Arts Council Individual Grants Award (2018), Royal Academy Schools Fellowship (2016-19), Royal British Society of Sculptors Bursary Award (2017-18), Wien Kultur Förderung (2017) and Amsterdam Fonds voor Kultur (2018). Residencies include Yarat Contemporary Art Space (2018), Belvedere Museum Vienna (2017), BijlmerAIR Amsterdam (2017), Villa Lena (2017), Nida Art Colony (2017) and Florence Trust (2008-09) amongst others. Solo projects include: *How to live together*, CBK Zuidoost (Amsterdam, 2018); *The Shape of Ritual*, project commissioned by Belvedere Museum (Vienna 2017); *Towering in the conditions of fragments*, Passen-gers (London 2017); *Staccato*, Marcelle Joseph Projects (London 2016). Recent group exhibition include: *Ponto d'Orvalho*, curated by Joana Horta, Leonor Carrilho & Sergio Hidalgo, (Freixo de Meio, Alentejo 2021); *WOTRUBA. Himmelwärts*, curated by Gabrielle Stöger-Spevak, Belvedere Museum (Vienna, 2021); *Art in the Plague Year*, curated by Douglas McCulloh, Nikolay Maslov & Rita Souther, UCR California Museum of Photography, (California, 2021); *On Photographic Beings*, Latvian National Museum (Riga 2020); *Boundary Layers*, Yarat Contemporary Art Space, (Baku 2019); *Prevent this Tragedy*, Dateagle / Vongoetz Art (London 2018); *Contemporary Sculpture Fulmer*, *Better Living: Tenderflix film festival*, The Horse Hospital (London 2017) amongst others. Since 2014 the artist has run *Allotment* - a collaborative research project that explores social relationships and cultural politics through food. Jokhova's work is held in the public collections of the British Government Art Collection, UK; Lafayette College Library, USA; Royal College of Art, UK and Royal Shakespeare Company, UK.

3 + 1

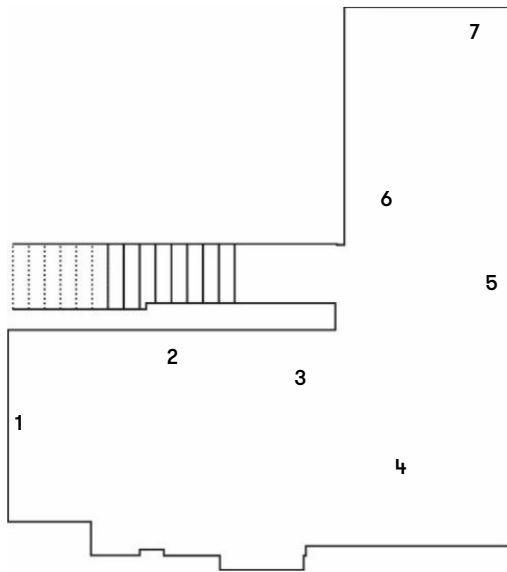
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GALLERY 1



1. Green: Briol, 2022

Archival print on Hahnemuhle paper, 46,7 x 35 cm

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2. Green Sun, 2022

Cotton, linen, synthetic velvet, steel, natural dye, cotton embroidery thread, stoneware and porcelain glaze

342 x 150 x 9cm

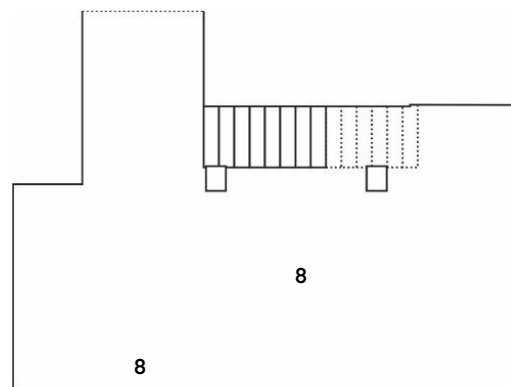
3. Picoesque, 2022

Stoneware clay, porcelain and ceramic glaze, dry plants, steel, volcanic gravel, 212 x 60 x 60 cm

4. Azoreana, 2022,

Stoneware clay, porcelain and ceramic glaze, steel, volcanic gravel, 245 x 95 x 120 cm

GALLERY 2



5. Green wall drawing, 2022, Mural, pastel

6. Tapadinhas, 2022

Stoneware clay, porcelain and ceramic glaze, dry plants, steel, volcanic gravel, 312 x 250 x 250 cm

7. Green: Necessidades (diptych), 2021

Archival print on Hahnemuhle paper, 102 x 68 cm

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8. A philosophical question, 2022

Stoneware clay, porcelain and ceramic glaze, glassware, plants, soil, steel, hand-made cotton aprons and apliqué, Variable dimensions