ANXIETY IS A FEELING OF UNEASE

CURATED BY ANTONIA MARSH



ANTONIA MARSH, FOUNDER OF SOFT OPENING - WHICH ORIGINATED IN A VITRINE IN PICCADILLY CIRCUS TUBE STATION BEFORE MOVING TO A MORE CONVENTIONAL GALLERY SPACE IN EAST LONDON - CURATES A SELECTION OF ART IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANXIETY INDUCED BY MONTHS OF LOCKDOWN.

ABOVE – Shannon Cartier Lucy, Morning Prayers, 2018, oil on canvas, 55.9 x 48.3 cm Courtesy of the artist, Soft Opening, London and Lubov, New York



Anxiety is a feeling of unease. A distinct sensation who embrace, semi-naked, on a couch in a darkened ality. Daiga Grantina's sculptural constructions of fear - particularly about things that are about room, at once together and isolated. In Morning establish a tension between material properties of to happen or which could happen in the future, Prayers, a faceless female figure kneels in prayer, organicand synthetic, hard and soft, hollow and solid. whether real or imagined - inundates its sufferer with lurching forwards from the end of her bed, head Jala Wahid's waxen work extends and complicates minimal notice. It's contagious, overwhelming and in hands. The unsettling dichotomy of intimacy these binary tactilities, and Jessi Reaves's absurdly unpredictable. Even thinking about it can prompt and alienation found in this painting describes a upholstered shelving unit perverts the boundary that little wave, starting somewhere deep inside subconscious space that oscillates between rational between form and function, imploring the viewer the belly and spreading upwards through the chest. and disordered. Hsu continues an ongoing series that to reconsider their relationship to design, to the Somehow at once intermittent and unremitting, as visualises a dream she had about her last dog, Aesop, domestic, to the familiar. soon as an anxious thought is resolved, another might glimpsing his reflection in a woodland pond. Together, this group of works offers a subtle and appear about something completely unrelated. Elsewhere, considered pictorial devices arouse a intuitive visual language of longing, angst and

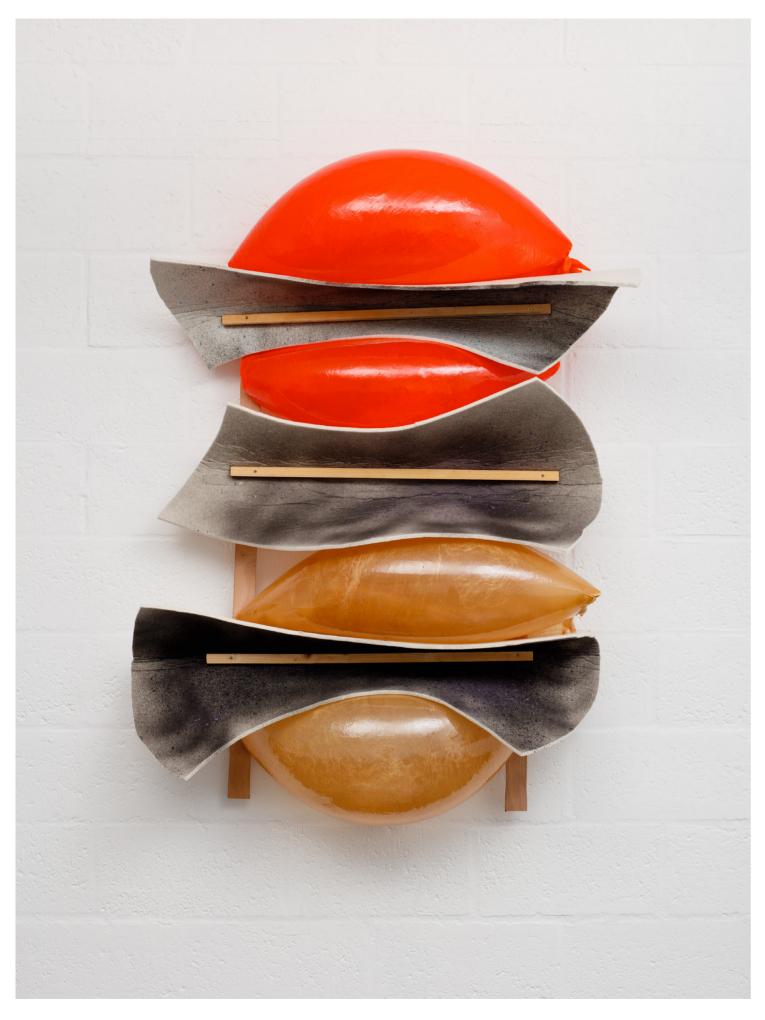
The works included in these pages consider or suspenseful theatricality. Kayode Ojo's photograph, uncertainty. As individuals and collectively, human envision varied anxious states: desire, loss, antici- wherein an unseen figure knocks one of a pair of beings accumulate and attach to such negative pation, fear, preoccupation, obsession, tension, forgotten champagne glasses over, engenders a emotions. Over the last few months, these feelings of loneliness, isolation, nostalgia. Whether felt bodily familiar enmeshment of celebration and drama - fear and frustration have understandably become or psychologically, these states seem to represent a duality which the soft folds of Louise Giovanelli's so common as to materialise relentlessly. We spend both the potential cause and effect of a brief velvety blue-silver curtain also teasingly conceal. so much time avoiding anxiety, but it is precisely in anxious feeling or more substantial episode. This Balanced just so, to imagine a vision of perfect that avoidance that it lies. Unfortunately, for those pattern reveals the cyclical nature of anxiety: precarity, Eric N. Mack's seductive sculptural assem- of us who are less inclined towards continuous cause and effect continuously loop, unbroken; or, blage pieces together emblems of feminine elegance commitment, the tried-and-tested home remedies if momentarily quietened, tend to resurface later. with nostalgia to embody a materiality of desire, of self-care take practice - but the results can be In Zoe Barcza's tragicomic How Alcohol Makes Me while Carlos Reyes presents sun-faded red velvet transformative. Even sharing one's concerns, no Feel, a petrol pump pours its contents into the limb jewellery displays from a store in downtown New matter how irrational, can provide the necessary of a grinning girl as she tumbles into a cavernous York as spectres of outward-facing, public desire. relief to move out of an anxious moment. Ultimately, darkness labelled 'The Abyss', while bursting into Comparably, via a complex process of image-making various trusted (and admittedly some less reliable) moments of fiery combustion. For Barcza, Lewis and reworking, Sara Cwynar's lusciously luminous sources consistently teach that sitting with this Hammond and Shannon Cartier Lucy, the figure - red rose exemplifies our insatiable appetite for, feeling of uncomfortableness, of dis-ease, instead of or in the case of Brook Hsu, the animal - becomes commodification of and total infatuation with distracting ourselves from it or, worse still, ignoring a conduit for mood or emotion, an allegory for a digital images. it, can lead to respite in the form of a previously feeling that passes from artist to viewer. Hammond Other works seem to devour the space around unknown sense of inner quiet and the ultimate end paints an intimate loneliness between two figures them through interrogations into form and materi- goal, peace of mind.

Jala Wahid, Born from and Buried in Baba Gurgur, 2018, microcrystalline wax, beeswax and MDF, 250 x 130 x 30 cm Courtesy of the artist and Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna. Photography by Kunst-Dokumentation.com





Louise Giovanelli, *Pool*, 2020, oil on canvas, 100 x 70 x 4 cm Courtesy of the artist and GRIMM Amsterdam/New York







Daiga Grantina, *Stanna*, 2020, fabric, felt, plastic, wood, ink and screws, 154 x 115 x 41 cm © Daiga Grantina Courtesy of the artist and Emalin, London. Photography by Plastiques

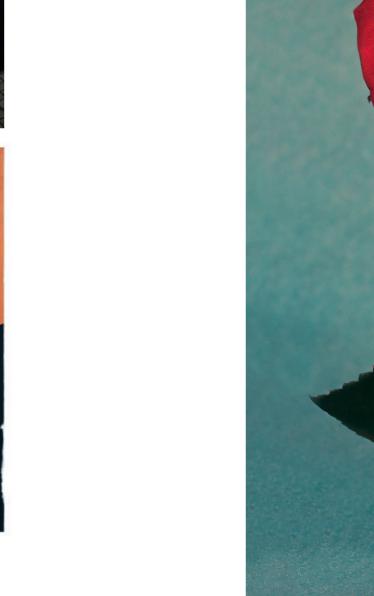
TOP — Jessi Reaves, *Padded Cabinet*, 2017, plywood, foam, fabric, paint, sawdust and wood glue, 154 x 263.5 x 43 cm (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Herald St, London. Photography by Ken Adlard ABOVE — Brook Hsu, *Aesop by the Pond*, 2018, oil on wood, 10.2 x 15.2 cm Courtesy of the artist and Bortolami, New York. Photography by John Berens



Carlos Reyes, *7129619 (2)*, 2018 Neck-form display (Canal Street, New York), velvet and maple, 124.5 x 26.7 x 26.7 cm Courtesy of the artist and Bodega, New York

Lewis Hammond, *Kyur*, 2020, oil on canvas, 180 x 130 cm Courtesy of the artist and Lulu, Mexico City. Photography by Ramiro Chaves





Sara Cwynar, *Red Rose II*, 2020, metallic chromogenic print mounted on Dibond, 76.2 x 61 cm © Sara Cwynar. Courtesy of The Approach, London, Foxy Production, New York and Cooper Cole, Toronto

 TOP – Kayode Ojo, Lucien, New York, 2016, photograph, 34.3 x 41.9 cm Courtesy of the artist and Sweetwater, Berlin
ABOVE – Zoe Barcza, How Alcohol Makes Me Feel, 2019
Acrylic, vinyl paint and collage on linen, 150 x 220 cm Courtesy of the artist and Bodega, New York

THE ABYSS

