

De Fem gathers artists Apolonia Sokol, Julie Lænkhholm and Oksana Shachko in an exhibition crafted from a mystic tradition tracing back to Hilma af Klint. Klint believed that art portrayed expressions of divine intervention belonging to spirits; rendering artists mere vessels through which creativity was expressed. Artists, in return, make sense of the visible world by summoning spiritual powers, gathering forces in secret women-only meetings. As Klint's mission was to embody hidden dimensions of life, so her art remained locked away from the public, as to emphasize the sacredness of the powers she had summoned; forces of mysticism and femininity *De Fem*.

The exhibition *De Fem* thus calls upon Klint's blissful powers of assembly, creativity & spiritual support amongst women artists; weaving together the artists' own internal landscapes to their creative work. An attempt to simultaneously portray, project and feed of the power of women in history, women in religion and women intimately. Seen in Lænkhholm's portrayal of the invisible threads which exist between women in the genealogy of her family, in Shachko's subversive portrayals of icons and in Sokol's intimate portraits of friends and lovers. Curiosity to come close, uncover and dominate drives the attempt to capture women elusiveness and mystic, inherent to their penetrating presence. However, the secret wells of power remain hidden in the undercurrents of their soul as to preserve dignity, leaving others to mythologize them.

For the artists, idealization of their subjects is not the goal but freedom from chains; chains which distort darkness in women into badness in women, which render the occult dangerous, and which obscure women's place and space in history as powerful subjects inclined to explore their primal creativity. Each of the presenting artists thus sail forth and through uncharted territories, pointing to the ebbs and flows of spiritual integration, between idealization and denigration, darkness and light, absurdity and laughter, and through the loud healing roar of aggressiveness.

A feminist and transgressor at heart, Oksana Shachko recycles the exact form of religious iconic portraits in order to come across with her stinging critique of reigning patriarchy in Christian institutions. Thankfully, the overarching goal of dismantling repressive powers does not exclude a little humor on the road thereto. Aliens, bare breasts, pussies, a white bride breaking free and burkas all seem sensical on the path to subversion of domineering Chris-

tian logic. Shachko intelligently expose idolatry by recycling its form and inserting "sinful" imagery to mirror their own absurdity. Paradoxically the seeming loyalty to the form of iconic pieces, nudges us to imagine that replacements, such as women's bare and joyous flesh, can inspire the same awe as you know who (hint: long hair and tortured).

True to her name, Julie Lænkhholm channels her ancestry to point out lineages in order to break them free of their confinements; a true high priestess of justice. A creative call to gather the histories of Icelandic women and poetically weave their voices into her tapestry; infusing sense into fragmented parcels belonging to fierce women of her blood, aggrandizing them into a collective form; As Lænkhholm and the women accompanying her becomes masters of their own creations, the hold historical representation have on their narrative evaporates into thin air. Pursuing liberation further in the depths of mythology, Lænkhholm recreates a cask of Medusa's face which serves a warning to female destinies punished for being beautiful priestesses. Finally, Lænkhholm performs a song **For Amal**, politically demonstrating kinship to a dear Muslim friend, tracing points on the body each referring to a voice; a celebration of the multitudes humans contains within them in spite of cruel diminishment by political agendas.

Apolonia Sokol's portraits invites us into an intimate room much more grandiose than the space they physically embody. The fragility of their avoiding postures and downcast eyes allude to a delicate moment shared between Sokol and her subject; as she showcases an innate ability to fixate on the most pressing vein in her subjects, it seems as though no layers exists between painter and painted, between subject and object. Sokol's has incomparable fidelity to the cracks acquired by her intimate friends, lovers and brother-fiancés. In the puff's and pains of life, Sokol eyes the passion and the preciousness of the life-blood which spills out of these wounds, as small drops of wrench bent diamonds. Where others shy away from the damage, Sokol forcefully blows away the dirt and brings life to the dead; rising her subjects from above the mundane and into phoenixes rising from the ashes. Reigning queen over the Life/Death circles of existence, she hands equal amounts of light and darkness.

Let yourselves fall under the sour and sweet spell of these women, following their path into the redemptions of past souls.

Siham Benamor

De Fem

Works

(left-to-right, top-to-bottom)

Julie Lænkholm

Medusa, 2017

Plasta, cast in collaboration
with the Royal Casting Collection,
SMK, Copenhagen.

Oksana Shachko

untitled, 2016

Tempera and gold leaf on wood
19.5 x 30cm

Oksana Shachko

untitled, 2016

Tempera and gold leaf on wood
27 x 36cm

Apolonia Sokol

kiss, 2017

medium

18 x 25cm

Oksana Shachko

untitled, 2016

Tempera and gold leaf on wood
19 x 25.5cm

Apolonia Sokol

Emma, 2017

Oil on canvas

46 x 30cm

Julie Lænkholm

Pegasus Vinge, 2017

Naturally-dyed wool,
dyed-found fabric

224 x 134cm

Verso ~ text by Siham Benamor

Sat. 02 Sep ~ *For Amal*, a performance conceived by Julie
Lænkholm.

De Fem has been organised by Hannah Parker.

Julie Lænkholm (b. 1985) lives and work in Copenhagen.

Oksana Shachko (b. 1987) lives and works in Paris.

Apolonia Sokol (b. 1988) lives and works in Paris.