

Katharine Fry: *Please call me home*



Katharine Fry *I would tell you everything but there's no room* Digital video still 2016

24 April - 29 May 2021

For Katharine Fry's first solo show at the gallery, *Please call me home*, the artist transforms the intimate space into a series of unsettling encounters with uncanny screen bodies, punctuated by strewn metal skins. With a focus on the body as the boundary where self and other meet, her videos feature the same barely alive female figure performing limited gestures, connected to her containing environment by her mouth. Fry's sculptures are chameleonic shrouds, enfolded around now empty interiors while reflecting whatever surface they encounter.

Underpinning *Please call me home* is a condition Fry calls *house arrest*; the figure's desire for a lost home, for a return to a fantasy state of wholeness, and the impossibility of this nostalgic homecoming. Desire emerges in her separation from this longed-for state. Desire is compressed under the boundary of her skin, frustrated that it cannot escape this containing limit. Anxiety appears here too. Now separate, she fears the unknown result of her dissolution into an other. Herein lies her ambivalence.

She finds herself contained in the house of her skin, cast in a role she has no desire to perform. Her only desire is for her lost home, but her way back is barred. She moves from object to object, looking for merger, looking for home. Her desire wants to escape the confines of her boundaried body, to eradicate her body. As a body, she can only remain separate. A chorus singing of longing for binding and release permeates each video while the figure remains caught on an impossible threshold.

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Opening times: Thursday to Saturday 2-6 pm and by appointment

Desire to escape her physical limits pours out of her mouth as gravel in *I would tell you everything but there's no room*, as animal sounds in *Creepers*, and as startling vital fluids in *After the transformation I was just the same*. She marks her anxious need to confirm herself, to maintain her limits, by blocking her mouth with furniture in *Tablemouth* and underwater with a hose in *Cry for Love*.

Her newest works, developed during the pandemic and following Fry's hospitalisation with Covid-19, remain concerned with the boundary of the body but take two distinct forms. In video works *A deal with god* and *Her glass flower house*, the figure's body trembles not on the threshold between merger and separation, but with the repercussions of its boundaries being breached. Here she seeks to shore up the body - of the artist in the first work and a small doll puppeteered by the artist in the second - putting outside that which has penetrated it. Meanwhile, the progress and retreat of the virus plays out as a shifting sequence of flowers against a hallucinatory backdrop in *A deal with god* and a cavalcade of food and furnishings in a doll's house in *Her glass flower house*.

Fry turned to sculptural works while rebuilding her strength and physical autonomy. Tactile works that demand intimate engagement including pewter *Past imperfect: we were touching* and bronze *Here is mine to hold* are her response to the heightened conditions of separation and isolation, both in hospital and the world at large, together with the fear of contagion through physical contact. Hands emerged from her sense of a change in her connection to others - a sense of separateness following her journey to the beyond and back. Her hands come from that threshold, staging that separation together with her desire to reach and to touch.

Katharine Fry is a London-based artist working from performance into video. She recently completed practice-based PhD *House Arrest* at Goldsmiths. She exhibits nationally and internationally, including: Ann Arbor Film Festival, Michigan, USA (2021, 2019); *Visions in the Nunnery*, London (2018); *Terror Has No Shape*, Camden Arts Centre, London (2018), Alchemy Film Festival, Hawick, Scotland (2018), Oriel Davies Open, Newtown, Wales, (2018); and *The Modern Language Experiment*, Folkestone Triennial, (2017). Recent prizes include: Hauser & Wirth First Prize and Soho House Mentoring Prize for Black Swan Open (2018) and First Prize for Creekside Open (2017).

For more information and images please contact us.

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