

Press Release

**Artists: Dario Biancullò - Will Fredo - Zoë Marden
PRICE - Gavilán Rayna Russom - Pamina Sebastião**

Title: Queer to the Bank

Curated by Lorenzo Xiques

Opening: Novembre 13, 2021 12 pm / 7 pm

Dates: November 13 to December 2021

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 2 pm/6pm.

Saturday 10am/2pm or by appointment

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Galleria Fonti is pleased to announce the group exhibition *Queer to the Bank*, with artists Dario Biancullò, Will Fredo, Zoë Marden, PRICE, Gavilán Rayna Russom and Pamina Sebastião, curated by Lorenzo Xiques.

The exhibition will be the sixth of a series of group shows in which guest artists and artists of the gallery program will deal with a specific topic showing both existing works or commissioned for the event. The six artists involved will collaborate and explore the concept of "queerness" in the current globalisation era, used as a pretext to develop anthropological or psychological analysis on the territory in a critical and expositive ideal dialogue.

Analkaracter, 2021 is the title of the costume made by artist Dario Biancullò in his house-studio in Forcella. An "imperfect dress" that stands as a metalogue between the processes of industrialization imposed by the fashion system and the primordial creative act, recovering discarded garments and reassembling them with inorganic objects recovered from the street, in a Neapolitan baroque punk-glam aesthetic, witness of a creative and critical resistance on the territory.

"I think I met this competitive method for the first time when I was a teenager doing ballet... I wanted to wear those beautiful dresses worn by my female dance partner, instead I was forced to dance inside a frack that had a number behind the shoulders and I had to compete. I had to win and the gain the judges approval in order to be seen, in order to exist ... it was me and "her" against everyone. The naive attempt by a classical and traditional family, who thought they were educating me in discipline through dance, turned out to be a tight and stifling, economical and competitive system. Many years later I found myself in a gay disco in Naples while seeing for the first time two men dancing together, and I started to cry like a child...

That experience brought me back to my own reality, a reality that does not feel the need to be legitimized through the concept of success based on the dynamics of one-on-one competition, winner or loser, in a binary methodology that the fashion system endorses by proposing the concept of the dress as the only expression of male or female gender, or of social class wealthy or less wealthy, still binary. A reality that identify itself in the sharing and "interchange" of experiences -through a "fluid" method- and conceptualize the dress as an element of protection in a primitive way, as the first safe space to inhabit, without gender, and identifies in it new and alternative narratives".

Will Fredo is a non-binary artist, writer and editor exploring power dynamics, cultural dislocation and the intersection of pop culture, decolonial thought, queerness and technology. Born in Portugal of Guatemalan and Cape Verdean heritage, Will is based in Cologne and Berlin, Germany, since 2017 Will is the deputy editor of Contemporary And, an art platform focused on African perspectives and the initiator of Sexual Healers TV, an art project dedicated to bio politics and s3x work.

Central to **Sexual Healers TV**, the video installation at Galleria Fonti, is how the artist engages with the artistic and social practices of othering subjects. Will Fredo's various embodiments throughout the episodes, from artist to s3x worker and vice-versa, put into question institutionalised notions of respectability, epistemology and legitimacy, highlighting the parallelism between sex and profit and art and profit, in the figures of the sex worker or artist when they face the dynamics of the market.

“Grammatical language, however, is only the scaffold upon which the suffocating semantics of (Eurocentric) contemporary visual representation can assert hegemonic authority. Alongside the advent of camming, OnlyFans and the proliferation of fourth-wave feminist polemics surrounding the complicated (or, perhaps, promising) cross-pollination of intersectional body politics, sex work and technology, Fredo's four-channel video installation suggests that discourse and social change are panting, trying to keep up with the digital fury they have, for better or for worse, fallen prey to. Combining sociological research, fiction, humour with an ambiguously ciné-vérité aesthetic, Sexual Healers TV ask: what does, can, and should democratised, dignified sex work look like in a post-woke age of digital capitalism?”

Zoë Marden is an artist, curator and writer. She grew up in Hong Kong and is currently based in London. She works with performance, video, text, sound, sculpture and installation to create alternate worlds and speculative futures. Her work is research based and is concerned with intersectional feminism and where it overlaps with the post colonial. Zoë is part of the CAMPerVAN collective, which investigates the queering of spaces through performance.

MERMANIA is a work in progress, a recording of a live digital performance lecture Mermania: Tales of Tentacularity (The tentacles of COVID Capitalism). The project includes a video (<https://vimeo.com/429328266>), a digital printed silk banner and clay sculptures .

Zoë's intimate performances play with the voice, activating soundscapes of desire and vulnerability investigating the mythologies of witches and mermaids and their resonance within contemporary culture.

The mermaid is etched into our memories through Disney's The Little Mermaid, where Ariel and Ursula encapsulate extremities of gendered identities, in which Ursula the sea witch is the embodiment of Divine, the Queen of all drag queens. A queer Icon and feminist anti-hero in animated form, Ursula's tentacles take up space, they push at the boundaries of gender and sexuality. Her tentacles become a metaphor for Donna Haraway's understanding of tentacular thinking and the importance of an intersectional perspective. In her book Staying with the Trouble (2016), tentacularity is a way of articulating and encouraging biological and political symbiosis in the current COVID-19 crisis. Ursula's tentacles expand and contract inviting us to embrace other ways of being in the world.

“For us humans, the flow and flush of waters sustain our own bodies, but also connect them to other bodies, to other worlds beyond our human selves. Indeed, bodies of water undo the idea that bodies are necessarily or only human. The bodies from which we siphon and into which we pour ourselves are certainly other human bodies (a kissable lover, a blood transfused stranger, a nursing infant), but they are just as likely a sea, a cistern, an underground reservoir of once-was-rain.” Astrida Neimanis, Bodies of Water.

PRICE is a fictional character who appears in various performances. His work is characterized by elaborate soundscapes, costumes and stage design often developed in collaborative constellations. His productions play with the audience's expectations of the exposed, ostensibly authentic self of the performer, who emotes before their eyes. They are interspersed with pop-cultural set pieces, mechanical sounds, rhythms and his own singing voice. The voice forms a central element of his work. PRICE views it as an acoustic form of emotional communication outside language's imperative to create meaning. In PRICE's work, different spaces—each with their own economies, mechanisms of historization and exclusion, norms and potentials—overlap: the stage of theater and performance, the club, digital space, the fashion runway, the exhibition space. The drama known as PRICE unfolds against the backdrop of spaces divided into their individual, constituent parts. His performances alternate between total immersion and the abrupt unmasking of the means of theatrical staging. Part of this involves the emotional work that has to be invested in order to maintain the fiction of the performer's individual identity—a genuine expenditure that is always also an effect, like the artificially shimmering sweat on his forehead. These are not the irreconcilable oppositions of artificial and authentic around which he moves. Rather, PRICE is interested in the conflicting relationship between these socially normative categories, the realm of which is the (queer) self, the (queer) body. Misfit costumes reference a variety of other possible forms of wearing by different bodies; instances of stumbling and struggling sneak into PRICE's work. For him, failure is always also part of a queer strategy: an indifference to assimilation, rigid identities and the demands on the self in digital capitalism. It is a second-degree failure that is always part of the presentation.

Sequences (Here We Are)

Installazione sonora

Sequence 1, Adagio 1:25 min

Sequence 2, Andante 0:14 min

Sequence 3, Allegro 1:36 min

Sequence 4, Adagetto 2:30

Sequence 5, Siparietto 3:00 min

Sequence 6, Andante 0:14 min

Sound production in collaboration with Renato Grieco

Gavilán Rayna Russom is an interdisciplinary artist based in New York City. Over the past two decades she has produced a complex and compelling body of creative output that fuses theory with expression, nightlife with academia and spirituality with everyday life. Rayna's renowned prowess with analog and digital synthesizers as composing instruments locates itself within her larger vision of synthesis; an artistic method of weaving together highly differentiated strands of information and creative material into cogent expressive wholes. The central thread of this practice is the exploration of liminality as a healing agent, a phenomenon she has been engaged with since childhood and has researched at an astounding depth. Her work is cumulative and experiential. It requires time and attention to take in, and it powerfully rewards those who bring their time and attention to it. In March of 2020 Rayna founded Voluminous Arts 1, a creative network for supporting and disseminating works by boundary pushing artists.

"This untitled work is a fragment of an installation called SINless that appeared in Producing Fututres: An Exhibition on Post-Cyber Feminisms at the Migros Museum, Zurich. The installation was composed of discarded materials and, except for a few fragments such as this one, it has been discarded itself. SINless dealt with the persistent presence of the dead and the failures of digital media to transcend death; proposing instead the internet as a continuous seance. This particular fragment; made of two supports for faciliating access to a toilet and the sleeves of a fringed sweatshirt, references graphic elements of Swiss/German folklore that render birds in double to represent spritiual flight between the worlds of the the living and the dead."

Pamina Sebastião is a multidisciplinary visual activist based in Luanda. Their work includes text, film, photography and collages, often centring their body as a medium-terrain from which to interrogate coloniality in Luanda's context. They were a co-founder of the Arquivo de Identidade Angolano, a queer activist archive created in 2017; a member of Ondjango Feminista; part of the team of LINKAGES Angola project and an overall activist on gender in sexuality for many years focusing on stigma and discrimination as well in sexual and reproductive health and rights. Sebastião is also the creator of Só Belo Mesmo, a multimedia project launched in 2020, which engages with the reflection on our living bodies experiences outside of the current existence categories, re-imagining a body as part of the decolonization process, intersecting the insertations of gender, race and sexuality in contemporary Angolan society influenced by colonialism and the coloniality of power.

*"My body doesn't exist yet. This body - which it's not mine - is a product of invention where our existence is captured and generate profit for a structural that does not allow us to be alive. Dying does not mean to forget how not existing make us bleed. You can see the red, right? Instead, dying means to transgress. To transmute. It's a necessary crossing to finally exist because my body doesn't exist, yet. So, move that blue line and imagine what that body could be. The three colleges are part of a series called **"Death by registration"**. It reflects not only a critic to a body that was build up on us focusing on showing how the colonial structure captures, invent and produce our bodies as a way to profit from it. That it's not our body it's the insertions from the different categories (gender; race; class) that were created that does not allow us to exist. So, to get to a place of existence we need to imagine a new body and that means to die. But dying in here means to transmute to another form of existence. It's a necessary crossing. So, this installation is made by a second part which is the imaginary line: the blue line where we can see and move ourselves to the process of finding that new way of exiting to a body that it's not here, yet."*

*Collages by Pamina Sebastião
Crochet pieces by Tessa Carina*

Queer to the Bank

In modern Western culture, individual identity has become strongly intertwined with the work one does and the product one consumes. This slow and articulated process, which began in the colonial era, has seen capitalism set, among other things, the necessary conditions for the creation of the Gay and Lesbian identity that arose after World War II and structured into organized networks following the Stonewall riots in 1969. *"By allowing the individual to sell his labor and allowing him to purchase goods outside the family system, capitalism granted the alternative to the inherited family production system based on the nucleus formed by husband, wife, and children and emphasized the self-sufficiency that allowed homosexual people to move toward equality with heterosexual people."* (Capitalism and Gay Identity, John D'Emilio).

But identity politics is also one of the central themes underlying the debate carried out by minority and LGBTQIA+ movements, which identify precisely in capitalism systems of favoring a particular social group defined as "normed" at the expense of a "non normed" one, with its consequent marginalization. It is precisely in this area of marginalization that queer identity takes shape as a deconstructionist theory, rejecting the fixed categories in their limiting nature of defined and binary identities, hetero-gay, black-white, man-woman, typical of capitalism, in favor of a fluid and politically intersectional identity, which promotes a more inclusive and communitarian approach capable of opening the discourse with other people rather than closing it, and emphasizing shared values. It is for this reason that the normalization of queerness that we witness in today's age of globalization is undoubtedly cause for concern for queer activists. If queerness becomes normalized or mainstream, through operations of tokenism and mere pink washing without addressing and bringing with it the critical instances that distinguish it, it risks essentially losing its meaning.

However, there is a productive tension in which "queer workers" and corporations both seek benefits, in a dynamic interaction that seeks to use the very structures of capitalism to counteract its negative demands through development and change at the individual, organizational, and social levels, (Capitalism, Identity Politics and queerness converge, Rod p. Githens).

In the project *Queer to the Bank* I try to identify what can be recognized as queer beyond the power of fascination exerted by the fashion image, regardless of the possible representation of queer subjects or its sub-cultural references, dwelling on its epistemic value understood not only as an aesthetic practice, but as a visual-content capable of producing queer-effects and sensations.

Lorenzo Xiques