

Sveta Mordovskaya
Suckly Eye
24.11.2018–26.1.2019

Suckly Eye

“Suckly” is a peculiar neologism coined by Sveta Mordovskaya. It’s a portmanteau of “suckle”, a literary word meaning to “breastfeed” or “suck at the breast”, and “sucky”, very colloquial American teen-speak for “awful”, “unpleasant” or “ingratiating”, “obsequious”. So *Suckly Eye* could mean either a lustful or pacifying eye or a threatening, devouring, degrading eye. As the ambiguity of the title suggests, the artist opens up a poetic realm in her practice that eludes clear-cut interpretations and instead reflects material, spatial and linguistic relations.

The question remains: who or what exactly is sucking, or threatening to suck, whom or what?

What is striking about Mordovskaya’s earlier series of hats¹, masks² and huts³ is that, although all the sculptures relate to the human body, they also concomitantly attest to its absence—an absence variously manifest in the present exhibition as well. Even when the sculptures take on an anthropomorphic (*Untitled but more*) or an abstract cast (e.g. *Not titled yet I* and *II*), they invariably remain external to the body—as covers, cases or carapaces, as outfits, accessories or frames.

Not titled yet II, for example, blocks any attempt to glimpse inside the mysterious interspace (or the body). All we get to see is its tautly stretched covering, comprising two cloths draped one on top of the other, which calls to mind interior decoration—wallpaper, a curtain, perhaps even set design for the stage. This element of disguise and concealment piques our curiosity all the more. When we discover a sphere protruding from between the two pieces of fabric, we attribute a distinctive character to this pretty décor, even as we freeze, ashamed, under its gaze.

Is it now up to us to stop the Other from suck(l)ing—to slake its greedy thirst? Does this evocation of another entity mean the only thing that really exists here is our own supposition that something (threatening) is there? Or does it drive home to us how dependent we are on the mediation of the Other in order to become aware of our own existence?

Untitled but more, in contrast, wears no covering. Instead, we’re drawn to markings that suggest a body. But these few presences merely refer to more absences. An empty sculpture? Even the monocle allows no view of what’s behind it and merely leads us back to our own physicality and visibility. What the sculpture does not show, does not exhibit, is made explicit here in a different manner.

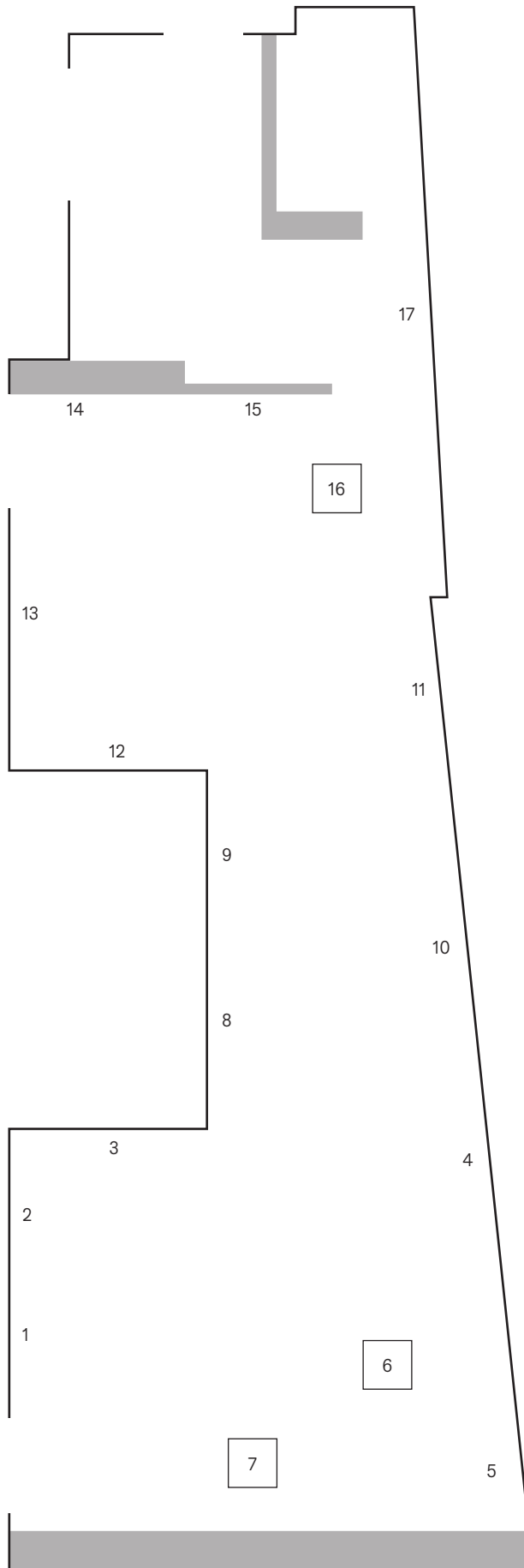
By drawing our attention to the disguise, the outfit, the surface, Mordovskaya simultaneously refers to the appertaining but absent body, the wearer, which in turn puts its shell, its husk—its reified category of being—in a predicament and transfers it on us. Her questioning of the material and objects zeroes in on their passive status. By refusing to view material and objects as passive, by entering into dialogue with them instead, she tests their properties and potentialities, thereby creating new realms that can be aesthetically experienced.

Lucie Pia

1 *Hut I-VII*, 2016

2 *gravidan* at Plymouth Rock, Zurich, 2017

3 *Das Mädchen aus gehobener Gesellschaft*, 2017; *Untitled*, 2017; *Kindheit und Reife*, 2017; *Kommunara 5*, 2017 at Kunsthaus Glarus, 2017



- 1 *Not titled yet I*
2018
Fabric on foam
53 × 90 × 31 cm
- 2 *Growing glasses I*
2018
Glazed ceramic
14 × 41 × 4 cm
- 3 *Uncontrolled moment*
2018
Fake fur on foam, glas and string
32 × 67 × 14 cm
- 4 *Not titled yet II*
2018
Fabric on foam, styrofoam
68 × 101 × 12 cm
- 5 *Faceheart*
2018
Unglazed ceramic, strings
95 × 40 × 8 cm
- 6 *Matrjoschka II*
2018
Ceramic and toys
18 × 32 × 15 cm
- 7 *Matrjoschka I*
2018
Ceramic and toys
14 × 34 × 17 cm
- 8 *Check the frame III*
2018
Glazed ceramic
32 × 26 × 18 cm
- 9 *Stomach sounds*
2018
Fabric on foam
51 × 71 × 21 cm
- 10 *Check the frame I*
2018
Glazed ceramic
34 × 32 × 6 cm
- 11 *Check the frame II*
2018
Glazed ceramic
34 × 33 × 4 cm
- 12 *Slidesorder*
2018
Plastic foil, tubes, buttons, fake
lashes, strings and hair
82 × 116 × 11 cm
- 13 *Untitled but more*
2018
Papier mâché, chain, chicken wire,
hanger, newspaper and mirror
77 × 97 × 17 cm
- 14 *Born from an egg*
2018
Straw, paint, plastic and metal
44 × 44 × 14 cm
- 15 *Growing glasses II*
2018
Glazed ceramic
16 × 37 × 6 cm
- 16 *Matrjoschka III*
2018
Ceramic and toys
11 × 22 × 14 cm
- 17 *Costume leftovers*
2018
Glas, plastic, fake hair, paint and
metal
94 × 14 × 10 cm