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First Person
Plural

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~~↳ Festival~~

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~~↳ Exhibition~~



The Giant

She comes into focus, percentages of her body and details appear. Wonderfully creepy: a mouth, a toe, a fingernail.

She moves her gigantic body, and it is effortless. She is many bodies. "I am a multitude," we hear her say.

You may ask yourself if she is public, infinite, and natural? Should you speak of her as a plurality? Are they political, local, all over the place? Are they connected, swarm-like, a unity?

Her body calls into question the concepts of your exceptionalism, our singularity, your meaning, your imperialism, our superiority, and our sanity. They are not magical, or religious. She is not sacred but secular. She is hyper-active and hyper-real like spiders, like flies. Is she viral?

"You know," she says, and her voice roars loud and noisy: "I might be speaking even when you cannot hear me. I make myself clear without you understanding me."

More gigantic words escape her mouth. She speaks in your language and then she speaks in the languages of others. She can howl and purr. Now she is giving off pheromones: "You must come closer, and you must try harder! You don't know how to bark but you are still an animal."

"Can you imagine the composition of a new body, of many, of others?" she asks, "and what about unfamiliar ones? I was a crow, then a coyote, then a producer, just like a spider, talking and sculpting. I see things many times faster than some of you, but I move very slowly. I was one and then many. Our features, our genders changed, changed many times. I speak several languages and shift my shape."

Heavy and clumsy, she pauses. Blurred are her balance and symmetry; blurred are her features. On her surface cuts, scrapes and cavities for ingestion and emissions enlarge. We see hyperbolized body parts, spiders' legs, arms, fingers, fingernails, her mouth and lips, genitals, the eyelids. We see limbs, but her center is absent.

"Becoming giants," she now mumbles quietly and with ease, "we know our body only in parts. We have to bend in an attempt to see, leave the center for the periphery." She rhymes sometimes, but then she continues seriously: "Can you imagine solidarity? Solidarity with the other ones, a group, a society, a mass of bodies and their identities? Come closer, you have to try harder!"

Do you feel affection towards her body? Can you sense its needs and desires?

"Come closer and you must try harder! I want to show you my reckless, disordered and dangerous body. Hear my 100-decibel voice. See my 5-meter tall body, my intellectual, sexual, political body. My public, exterior, infinite body, oh so natural body."

Soft liquids are seeping from her, giant streams of fluids and sighs like thunder. Her body shivers and they say: "We show you your instability. My body attacks the order of things. You fear us, oh we fear not. Accept the dangers that are emanating from us. We are the sleeping, the walking, the giants and the artificially intelligent."

She pauses and shifts from one body to the next. We see their blurred features, her arms becoming paws, becoming webs, becoming legs. Her hands become gigantic as cars. You see hairy skin, pores widen, fluids escaping the tiniest apertures.

You acquire a migraine from so much meddling with the body and you cannot bear the sight, the presence, and the smells of skin, and feces, urine, menstrual blood, spittle, bacteria, mucus and reckless, disordered, dangerous things. Too much is the close reading of a body, what it holds dear and

how it differs from you. Your posture shows your exhaustion, the limitations of your carcass and your muscular frame.

Her mouth opens again: "I speak from a different place. We are potentially dangerous, dangerous creatures. We will tear down your fences. We will open your eyes. The earth will move at the sound of our voices. One asked me to tell you that us plus them equals we. You see? You have to come closer and bear the sight of me."

We shiver. She might be joking, but they are angry and tired bodies.

Her body is noisy, physical, and constantly moving. They might have concentric circles instead of bones, electronic streams running through their arteries, light splaying across their multifaceted eyes, and a fine force coursing through what you would call nerves.

Her genes might have been altered by substances taken, injected, digested steadily, continuously. They might be bodies changed by invisible touch, tiny machines, mechanical, chemical implants, attachments, adornments and accessories. Titanium supports: cold, strong but flexible, mined and crafted. Shapes exactly measured to assist, implanted years ago. Difficult operations carried out on their bodies, the sensible destruction of molecules, dangerously long narcosis. Parts of their bodies rendered, digitally animated, moved by algorithms and machine labor.

Her voices grow loud again: "Some appearances may be assumed to project innocence. Some bodies are by definition assumed more guilty than others. You assume, but we know better! Some bodies are depicted more dangerous, rendered giants. You fear them, oh we fear not. We are giants, massive, old and angry. We find ourselves old, violent and hungry, hungry and dissatisfied by past decisions and present and future."

Dissatisfaction is the source of their energy and it generates their activity. You should understand, they do not prioritize personal comfort. They are too many and hope means activity.

"I want to tell you about the capitalization of nature, reproduction and recreation. Imagine an oh so soft body, the perfectly sculpted 20% of my body, my two day shaved body, my twenty-four-hour odorless body, my healthy body, peeled squished glossy body, my soft and slender body. My white shining teeth and perfect flesh, untouched by anything, anything but pleasantness, scented scents and fine feels?"

You sense the tiredness of their sedated body. "You know," she continues and their voices roar: "we are not up early, ready, inviting and tender, tender. I am entirely trivial, dystopian, erratic, ecstatic, symbolically me. You fear me, oh I fear not."

She pauses and laughs. Her laughter is multiple voices and sounds. She laughs and she jokes: "I am a giant, but cannot even lift my eyelid."

Her yawn fills your ears: "I want to show you my drugged body: intoxicated for recreation, rejuvenation, and calmness, calmness, and quietness, but I warn you: when we dream I dream vividly."

She falls asleep and you see her dreams. Chewing gum is stuck between her teeth. It is old and dry, in crumbs and pieces. It grows and fills her mouth, gigantic as a peach.

We see her moving her jaws, trying to spit, but it is almost impossible. She crams her gigantic fingers in and peels it out. Her giant teeth fall out. You are left speechless. She had a vision.

Published on the occasion of Barbara Kapusta,
The Giant, Gianni Manhattan, Sept. 2018

Festival
~~22.04~~ — 26.04.2020

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The Giant
↳ **Barbara Kapusta**

AUT 2018
Sculptures, texts

↳ **DE** *The Giant* setzt direkt beim Körper an, beziehungsweise bei einem in seine Einzelteile zerlegten Körper. Verfremdete Gliedmaßen, Organe und tentakelartige Körperteile versammeln sich zu Gruppen. In übergroßen Sprechblasen richten sich diese, für ein Ganzes sprechend, an die Betrachter*innen: Wie weit können wir uns die Bedürfnisse und Wünsche anderer Körper vorstellen? Mit wem und wie vielen können wir uns identifizieren? *The Giant* platziert die Besucher*innen innerhalb dieser Szene, verstrickt sie darin und lässt sie zum Teil des Ganzen werden.

↳ **EN** *The Giant starts directly with the body, or rather with a body dismantled into its individual parts. Alienated limbs, organs and tentacle-like body parts are grouped in the exhibition rooms. In oversized speech bubbles, they address the viewer, speaking for the whole: How far can we imagine the needs and wishes of other bodies? With whom and how many can we identify ourselves? The Giant places the visitors within this scene, entangles them and makes them part of the whole.*

Barbara Kapusta, *1983. A central recurring element in her practice is the conjunction of the body with materiality and speech. Materiality becomes entrusted with a queer agency that allows for diversity and vulnerability. She currently lives and works in Vienna. Her objects, films and text-based works have been shown in, among others, *Vice Versa: Our Earth is Their Moon, Our Moon is their Earth* at Kunsthalle Praha/Historical city centre Prague (2018), *Empathic Creatures* at Ashley Berlin (2018), *In Middens*, Gianni Manhattan (Vienna, 2017), *Instructions for Happiness* (KUP, Athens 2016), *Das Begreifen*, and *The Language of Things*, 21er Haus (Vienna, 2016), *The Promise of Total Automation*, Kunsthalle Wien (Vienna, 2016), *Dinge und Dialoge*, Scriptings (Berlin 2015), *Poesie*, mumok cinema (Vienna, 2015). Her publication *The 8 and the Fist* was published in 2017 by Gianni Manhattan.

Fig. ↳ Installation view: *Hysterical Mining*,
29.05.–06.10.2019, Kunsthalle Wien,
Photo: Jorit Aust

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Exhibition