

# Lyles & King

**Aneta Grzeszykowska**

***Domestic Animals***

**October 29 - December 10, 2022**

**Opening Reception: October 29, 6-8pm**

Aneta Grzeszykowska who for nearly two decades has explored the concept of identity – and the porous borders of her own subjectivity – in her newest work, *Domestic Animals*, 2022, crosses the species barrier.

An artist working with a woman's image of the self, Grzeszykowska often employs masks (which makes her a relative of Birgit Jürgenssen and Gillian Wearing) and effigies, but also goes as far as to propose the erasure of the self. In one of her best-known works, she probed the proof of one's existence by painstakingly removing her own image from 201 family photographs (*Album*, 2005). In the following years, she made various attempts at "taking off" her skin (self) in order to look at it with an outsider's gaze. In the 2011 film *Holes*, she photographed the isolated openings of her body; in the 2014 *Selfie*, she created a pigskin likeness of her face and interacted with it in a series of photographs. She had her little daughter Franciszka play with the artist's veracious bust made of silicone in the 2018 series *Mama* (shown at Lyles and King in 2018, and in the 2022 Venice Biennial exhibition). Exploring the image as a signifier of a person's identity, existence, or as a projection of the viewer, in *Domestic Animals*, Grzeszykowska "recycles" the pigskin masks of her face and puts them on her dogs. It is not them that she is focused on but, rather, the boundaries of the self and the confirmation of her own existence. While lending them human faces and following the dogs' quasi-human presence in the sequence of photographs, Grzeszykowska undermines the seeming simplicity of her gesture – the new dogs' faces are pig's skin, not human.

Rather than seeing dogs as humans, the artist is interested in looking at herself through the animals' eyes. The pigskin becomes a membrane of contact, the layer of negotiation, but also the representation of her energy. In several projects, Grzeszykowska not only took casts of her face and body, but also created dolls representing herself and her daughter (*Small Doll*, 2009; *Girl with a Chewing Gum*, 2009; *Franciszka*, 2015-2016). All these fetishes with magical potential became carriers of their energy; acting as stand-ins. Grzeszykowska trusts hers only to the closest members of her "family albums" – her daughter and now dogs – doubting her own singularity, the boundaries of her own self, and ultimately – her existence – and hoping to see herself with their eyes and through their relationship with her. By enabling animals' testimony to her own existence, she eliminates human superiority.

The artist's daughter, Franciszka, returns in the second work presented in this exhibition – *Album*, 2022. In it, Grzeszykowska continues the family album, now going backwards from 2022 all the way to 2010 when Franciszka was born, and this time, erasing her daughter's presence from the photographs. The elimination of a daughter can be seen as questioning and partial erasure of the mother's self – Grzeszykowska's art is a subtle, feminist recognition of the life's endless cycle.

Seen together in this exhibition, and from the perspective of Grzeszykowska's entire oeuvre, these artworks, directly connected with works past and future, show her dramatic efforts to pierce the shell of selfhood and discover one's self through relationships with others.

—Monika Fabijanska, 2022

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Aneta Grzeszykowska (b. 1974, Warsaw, Poland) currently has work on view in *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alameni, Giardini, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, IT. Her work has been exhibited at Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE; Kunstforum tu Darmstad, Darmstad, DE; The Francisco Carolinum Museum for Modern and Contemporary Art, Linz, AT; Raster, Warsaw, PL; MOCAM Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow, PL; Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, US; Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg, DE; Fotografiska Stockholm, Stockholm, SE; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, CH; Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL; Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, HU; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, MX; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, US; among many others. Her work is included in several museum collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Sammlung Verbund, Vienna; and many others. Grzeszykowska is represented by Raster Gallery and Lyles & King. She lives and works in Warsaw.