

31 May–22 June, 2024

ARUSHA

6 Percy Street, London

Plum Cloutman b. 1995 Hertfordshire

Pissing on the Inferno

Plum Cloutman's new body of work speaks to our cyclical, compulsive nature of obsessive self soothing - frequently futile, sometimes tragic and often funny. The theme of her work centres around hunger and consuming, exploring what goes in and what comes out and compulsive consuming to the point of sickness.

Taking the still, the ornamental and the static as raw artistic material, Plum uses her brush in small, deft concentric motions to animate her subjects. The thick and textured layers in her paintings enhance this theme, emphasising the visceral nature of human desires. Sharp and deliberate lines differentiate the pools of soft colour characteristics of the scenes she paints: a bricolage of textures, tones and moods that recall the hazy and unreliable dreamscapes of sleep. These images are often fractured between panels, or affixed to the more corporeal textures of steel or metal.

Plum Cloutman is a London-based painter and printmaker. She studied painting at Edinburgh College of Art.

Naomi Workman b. 1990 Somerset

Mythic from the Pacific

Naomi Workman spent the summer of 2023 in residence at ESMoA (the Experimentally Structured Museum of Art) in El Segundo, Los Angeles, USA. In the studio Workman developed a series of 28 drawings in pencil on paper, in a spiral-bound sketchbook privately filling the pages inventing a water-shaped human character dubbed 'Soup' anthropomorphising the origin of life. This muse-come-alter-ego metamorphoses into a female form, her long straight hair crests and troughs in the shape of waves on the Pacific Ocean.

'Soups' liquidity aids the evolution of her shape like a crab finding a new shell; she seeks vessels and watering holes to contain her. In her search, Americana and the distinct characteristics of west-coast Southern California emerge. Here she sprouts legs and assimilates; learning our human behaviours to walk among us. Shapeshifting she seeks a route through the underlying infrastructure of Los Angeles seeking the channelized rivers; the life force of the 'City of Quartz', built from the desert.

The chronology of the works charts an investigation into the urbanism and futurism of the Los Angeles Landscape. This everyday scenery goes through a personal transformation under the artist's gaze. The results are surrealist-comedic stories that comment on the absurdity of Los Angeles through a non-Angelinos eye. In 'Mythic from the Pacific' Arusha presents 28 framed sketchbook works on paper, offering a close look at the artist's working process.

Naomi studied at Camberwell College of Arts and at The Royal Drawing School. She lives and works in London.

How to Cook a Lamb Underground

The occasion is celebratory. It is spring. Lambs, for looking, graze a field in front of the large house. The lamb for cooking is from a farm over the hill. It is delivered by the farmer's wife, her wellingtons coated in shit - cow, fowl, pig. The large house was built for a Tory Prime Minister who visited when not tending an England grown fat on colonial exploitation.

The lamb can be comfortably carried on the shoulder and should be placed downstairs, in the wine cellar. The wine cellar is very cold and damp, protected by a large oak door and lit by a single bulb. It has beams, with hooks, from which the lamb can be hung. When the farmer asks, say yes, you would like the head. Its reflection in the cellar's many bottles will prove eerie, its shape now rid of sheepish features - no nose, no ears, no fur - closer to the human than the animal. It will make the base of a wonderful soup. The dog, the small dog, will sniff at the hanging lamb and run away, scared by this culmination of desire.

Now dig a hole on a spot with a view over Wiltshire - hill, plain, hill, motorway, it stretches away, ending in Swindon, where Englishmen speak Polish, Hindi and Cantonese.

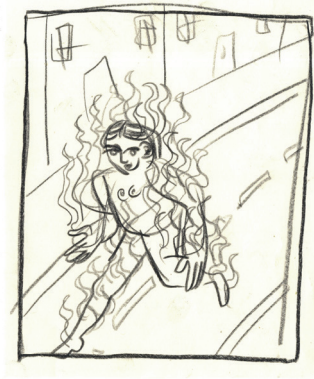
Dig a hole you could fit a man in, line it with stones, and upon these stones lay a large fire. Feed it wood, weeds, newspapers, bills, bailiff notices and court summons. Drink champagne from Lidl. Fetch the lamb and lay it on a table covered with aluminium foil, near the hole, beneath the stars. Stuff the cavity - the place of absence - with apples, plums, onions, leeks, garlic, a bushel of oregano and a fistful of salt and, using a leather needle and kitchen twine, sew it up.

All the while your best friend, who is pale and red faced and overweight and cowardly, will be shining a torch onto your work. "It is like battlefield surgery" he says, he who will never know war, who is uncomfortable even in silk. You grunt, half laughter, half agreement.

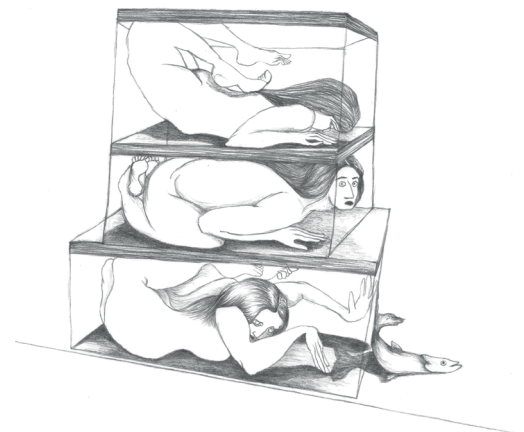
Now rub the lamb with olive oil, the cheapest you can find, and salt. Do not be gentle. Remove the head. Remove it with one swift slice of your meat cleaver. And after this another. And then another. And then go to the kitchen to find the kitchen scissors, with which you will messily snip through its tendons, small bones, reluctant skin. Throw the head into a saucepan on the floor and wrap the body in tin foil, then in hessian and finally in chicken wire, twisting each end.

By now the fire will have died down to hot red embers. Lay the lamb upon the embers and bury it, packing down the dirt. You will notice that the head has gone from the pan on the floor. The dog, perhaps?

The next day, the day of the feast, you will dig the lamb from its grave, thankful for its transubstantiation. Lay it on a table, upon which you have put a white cloth, as at a wake. When you strip the tin foil back, you will see that it has lost its preternatural demeanour. It is best eaten with fresh buttered bread, salsa verde and West Country cider. In two days - it is a warm spring - the lamb's head will be discovered beneath your mother's bed when she wakes, vomiting, half-suffocated by its stench.



Plum Cloutman, *Untitled*, 2024,
Pencil on paper



Naomi Workman, *Petco Fish Tank*, 2024,
Graphite on paper, 28 x 35.6 cm