

Press Release

Pamela Rosenkranz

Healer

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Sprüth Magers, London

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Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are pleased to announce *Healer*, Pamela Rosenkranz's first solo exhibition at the London gallery. Rosenkranz's work questions the authenticity of human experience, as she does not take the human being for granted as an entity. Everything that distinguishes humanity is subject to constant redefinition; it is continually being altered and influenced by insights at the frontiers of evolution, neurology, art and technology. Rosenkranz makes the visual sense palpable as a physical process. Her work short-circuits archaic instincts with robotics and cultural-historical symbols. References to online and meme culture abound.

Dwelling on the ground floor of the gallery is *Healer (Anamazon)* (2021), a robotic snake that can be seen through the gallery's ground-floor window façade, as if peering into a terrarium. It lingers in a habitat dominated by reflected green light. Electronic signals and electromagnetic fields – influenced by visitors' mobile devices – change its algorithm, causing the snake to writhe and sidewind, lift its head as if to observe its surroundings. The serpent's body of semiconductors, servo motors, and sensors is sheathed in shimmering, reflective kirigami scales, the patterning of which suggests a rainforest habitat. Though clearly a technological approximation, the snakebot stirs deep-seated feelings of fear and awe. Its robotically programmed writhing movements trigger primal human instincts; its sheer functionality turns ingrained cultural meanings on their head.

The work raises questions about the real while simultaneously highlighting a breakdown of the boundary between nature and artifice. At once fascinating and frightening, a moving snake elicits a powerful psychophysiological response: our eyes have grown more and more adept at recognizing snake patterns and movements over the centuries (as a sign of danger and a possible source of food once), a development that has contributed to our evolving sense of sight. The symbolism of the snake is complex, interpreted variously by different cultures as the beginning and end of time; as a reptile with exceptional survival ability or harbinger of a posthuman era; as a source of effective medicines via the synthesis of ingredients found in its venom; inspiration for biorobotics or – since ancient times – as a feature of the Rod of Asclepius, the serpent-entwined rod that is now a symbol of global health organizations. Emblematic of the art of healing, serpents continue to embody the dual outcomes of life and death, sickness and health.

Flickering LED spotlights illuminate snakebot skins resting on transparent pedestals, transposing the mimesis of nature into a new kind of naturalness marked by diodes and hyperconnectivity. The wood of the floor shimmers, a reminder of dismantled ecosystems. Other neurologically-complex experiential spaces emerge in the reflective surfaces of aluminum and mirrors, which the artist coats with delicate, semi-transparent layers of pink. Its color appears again and again in Rosenkranz's work, a reference to human tissue. The translucent layers of pink pigment on reflective surfaces, a hue not present in our biological spectrum, troubles the perception of our own visible reflection and the identity we construct when looking at ourselves.

The artist also applies the pigment to agency-watermarked images of the Amazon, always by hand using distinct, overlapping transparent-pinkish layers that have an arresting effect on motion, making it appear frozen. The beguiling paintings shift nature, archaic symbols, culture at large – transformed, branded and trademarked by international corporations – to new contexts. Oscillating between the sublime and the abstract, the repetitive and the expressive, the paintings evoke everything from pinkish-flesh to glowing, supernaturally green chlorophyll, simulating an aesthetic experience that is at once immersive and unsettling, protective and devastating. Nature as idea – immersive and alienating.

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Pamela Rosenkranz (*1979, Uri, Switzerland) lives and works in Zurich. She has held solo exhibitions at institutions including Kunsthaus Bregenz (2021), Kreuzgang Fraumünster, Zurich (2018), GAMeC, Bergamo (2017), Fondazione Prada, Milan (2017), Kunsthalle Basel (2012), Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2010) and the Swiss Institute, Venice (2009). Pamela Rosenkranz participated at several major international group exhibitions, including the Okayama Art Summit (2019) and the 15th Biennale de Lyon (2019). Her project Our Product was selected for the Swiss Pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale in 2015. Recent group shows were held at Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2021), Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2021), Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah (2020), MMK - Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2019), Garage Museum for Contemporary Culture Moscow (2019), Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2019), Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2018), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (2017) and Museo Espacio, Aguascalientes (2016).

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