



ANDROGYNE
GYMNASTIC
CITY

by Marte Bjørndal

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Androgyne Gymnastic City

by Marte Bjørndal

In this exhibition the artist Marte Bjørndal is stretched between two poles: the abstract of pure imagination and the figurative of storytelling. The latter has been a constant feature in the artist work. The exhibition is the prosecution of the performance "You can give me any job you want, and I will still feel like Donald", held by the artist in front of the Norwegian parliament in 2017. The performer, the Pig, invited pedestrians to create a collective art work in the name of social justice, equality and human rights. If, on one hand, this exhibition closes a circle in the artist's past activity, on the other, it illustrates her wish to move towards a pure creative force that frees her works from the weight of current issues.

Balancing between two tensions, Marte, despite confirming that she doesn't want to be a politician, cannot prevent a feeling of social consciousness from rising in her works. The collage *Albertine* is inspired by Christian Krohg's painting that reproduces the same subject. In Marte's collage, the faceless figure is represented in the same disconsolate position as in Krohg's painting. But the relationship between these two works goes beyond the mere composition. Marte restores the social value of the 18th century painting by revisiting the double morality then present towards prostitution and expanding this dualism to the contemporary social system. *Albertine* is a seamstress who, after being violated by an officer, is forced to live as a prostitute because of the social mechanisms ruling at the time. Through this character Marte reflects upon the double morality that characterizes the social structure in which we live and on which we rely, also considering the possibility that this androgyny isn't a product of society, but rather an intrinsic element to the human species.

The viewer is placed at the centre, between the two poles of his dual existence, of his androgyny. The expression of the best will to create a better world is held back by the underlying duplicity of human nature which makes in vain every seemingly significant intervention. Mr Gymnastic and Mr Red are the manifestation of the awareness of social inequality. Mr Gymnastic's head is a football that in Marte previous production played a crucial role as a tool to create a connection with the communities in the countries she visited as part of the project *The art of goalgetting*. The underlying symbolism is a red thread in this exhibition. The contradictions in the behaviour of European countries towards the shipwrecked in

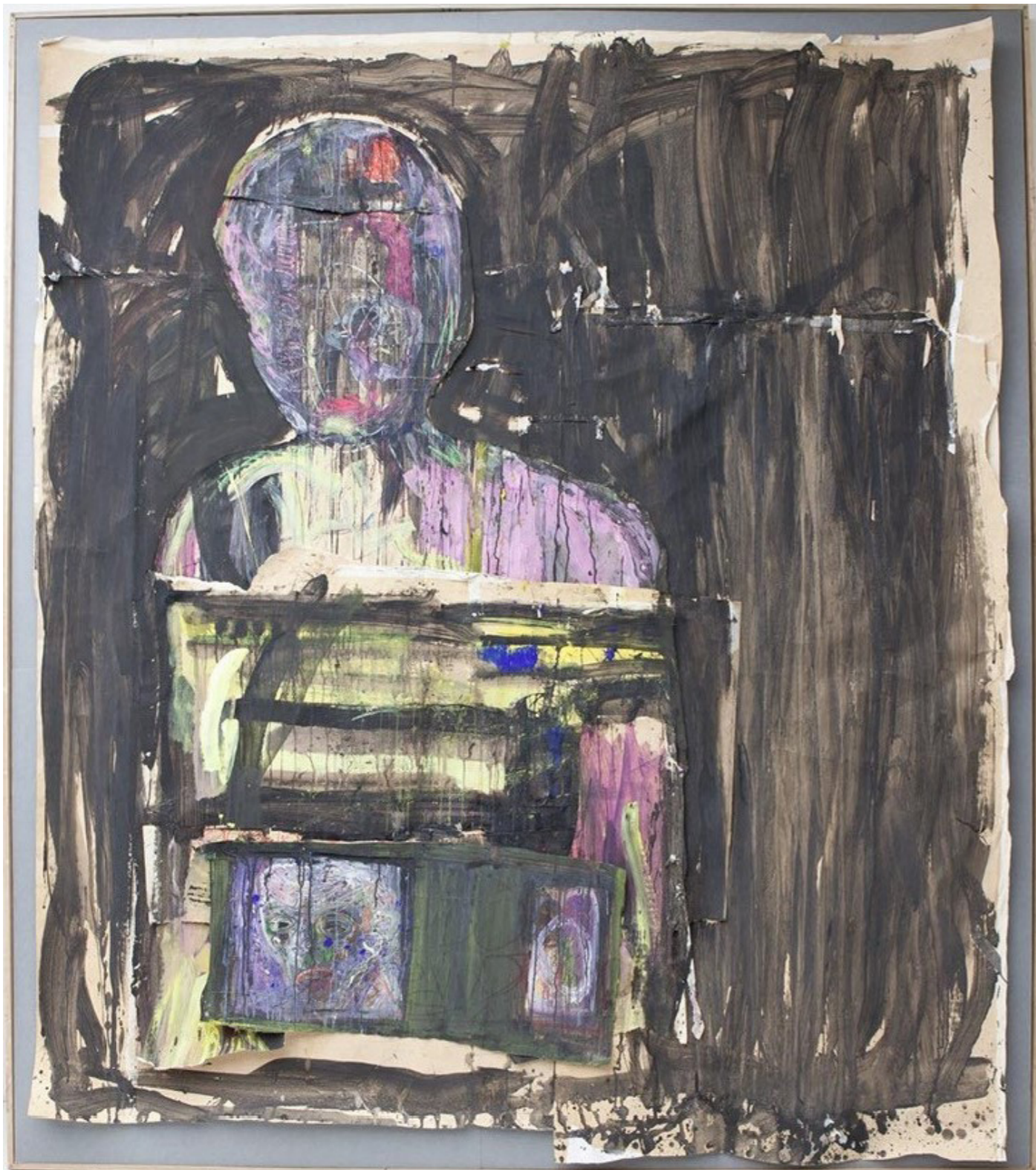
the Mediterranean are also present and represented visually through the mask worn by Mr Red (that in Norwegian means "afraid") and through the image of the sea that appears in the small painting by Marc Chagalle in the art work *Isolated values*.

The darkest side of this ambiguous androgyny is depicted as the endless process of The passport control and embodied by The Super Sadist Duck Judge, who is a cynical and perverse being with animal appearance: the oval skull sharpens at the bottom from where it protrudes what appears to be a beak ready to injure. The judge stands before the defendant but, instead of listening, he silences him, depriving of a voice and blaming those who should be taken care of. In this research Marte does not judge the behaviour of men but she highlights a profound truth that takes the spectator back to the very first artwork of the exhibition, to Mr Androgyne. The overlapping layers of paper and the intense brushstrokes represent the lack of rationality, the androgyny itself, the truth that lies underneath the surface: "The Androgyne is not limited to any one religion or philosophy. The symbol is universal. The Androgyne is above philosophy" (Marcel Duchamp). As Marcel Duchamp looked for the balance between this dualism, the female and the male, chaos and logics, Marte too reflects upon it by bringing forward concrete examples of how the irrational side creeps into everything arising a multitude of questions without providing any answer.

The art world is not spared from this great fresco that the artist paints. *Isolated values* includes the artist's own environment. The work features wire drawers in which a plastic flap supports the image of *La Baie des Anges* by Marc Chagall. The great value of art shouldn't be limited to a specific environment, as that of art fairs, and its value does not coincide with the monetary value that is judged during these events. In Marte's opinion art has a much higher value, which is the ability to go beyond the androgynous aspect and to conceive the existence of a possible unity of the opposites. The men's attempt to escape from one of the two poles is absurd. Art is the only tool that can reveal the absurdity of trying to escape from something that not only belongs to us but that is in our very nature.



Super Sadist Duck Judge
Collage; 226 x 200. Industrial paper, tape, glue, oil paint, acrylic paint, oil stickers, crayons, 2018.
NOK 55.000-



Citizen: Miss Albertine
Collage; 250 x 226. Industrial paper, tape, glue, oil paint,
acrylic paint, oil stickers, crayons, 2018.
NOK 55.000-



Citizen: Mr Androgyne
Collage; 250 x 226. Industrial paper, tape, glue, oil paint,
acrylic paint, oil stickers, crayons, 2018.
NOK 55.000-



Fine City Directions
Painting; 160 x 140. Acrylic, oil on canvas, 2019.
NOK 38.000-



Human Heater
Painting; 160 x 140. Acrylic, oil on canvas, 2019.
NOK 38.000-



Free us from Art
Painting; 160 x 140. Acrylic, oil on canvas, 2019.
NOK 38.000-



Family leaving the party
Collage; 350 x 180 cm. Industrial paper, tape, glue, oil
paint, acrylic paint, oil stickers, crayons, isolation foam,
2019.
NOK 58.000-



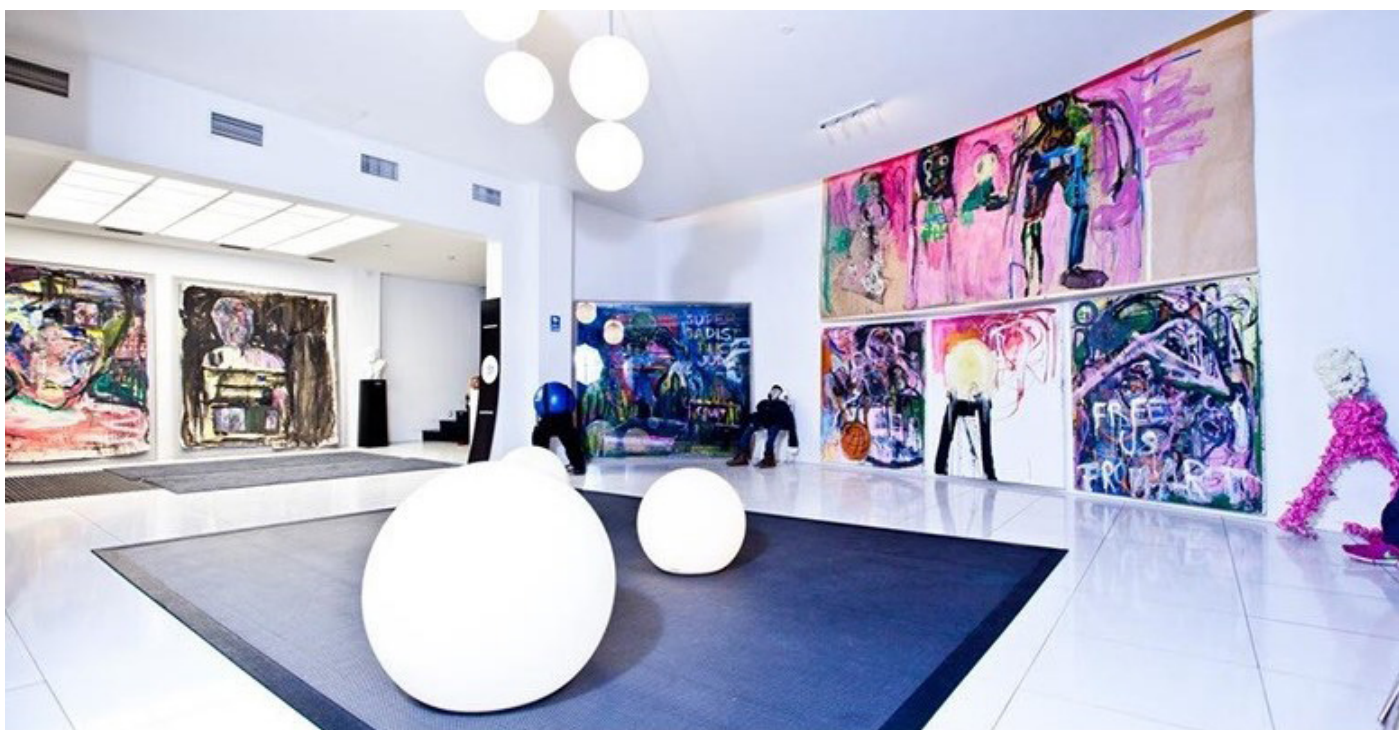
Mr. Gymnastic
Sculpture; 110 x 40 x 40 cm. Football, helmet, outdoor jacket, jeans, leather outdoor shoes, metal mesh, tennis balls, outdoor chair, 2019.
NOK 28.000-

Mrs. Gymnastic
Sculpture; 120 x 40 x 40 cm. Blue gymnastic ball, metal mesh, black alpin outdoor trousers, shoes with paint, grey pillow, outdoor chair, 2019.
NOK 28.000-



Herr Hansen
Sculpture; 120 x 40 x 40 cm. Metal mesh, isolation foam, goat, glue, paper, painting brush, 2019.
NOK 28.000-

Mr. Red
Sculpture; 100 x 40 x 50 cm. Rubber ball, metal mesh, jeans, outdoor shoes, red outdoor jacket, pillow, glava, 2019.
NOK 28.000-



Galleri TM51

www.tm51.no

The exhibition is shown both in Fridtjof Nansen plass and in Parkveien 5. Take contact for private viewing or purchase requests.

Contact: info@tm51.no, tlf 930 34 604