

JOKE EN LEX VUKEN IN DE KEUKEN, Or, a Lathering*

'Gravity (mass) is what makes my life difficult. And maybe hands... But I cannot live without a certain dose of gravity.' (Evita Vasiljeva, referred to from now on as E)

Soaps in their still states; no foam, froth or lathering. (Excess foam has been removed by E with spirit.) The soaps have accumulated traces, scraps, colours, a piece of rebar, perhaps paracetamol. A moth, flies, wires, images too. The flies guide me towards thinking of a state of control as opposed to the soaps themselves accumulating their corpses. And yet the traces are dispersed in the soap as if by a salt shaker, suspended in mid-material, hovering, worked.

A modular column, I smell concrete, see rusty rebars shaped like handles. *HOME* (2019) is clamped between Marwan's floor and ceiling. The threefold top of said column is affixed to a new wall extension, now reaching beyond a wall extension that has been in this space forever. Following calculations, the modules are to be handled by approximately 1.5 persons at a time. All modules together roughly fit the trunk of a medium to large-sized passenger car.

When they started to dig out the metro tunnel underneath here, some houses in this neighbourhood had to be supported by extensible pillars, preventing them from collapsing into the sagging ground. 'Shouldn't you warn the neighbours that *HOME* is not built for that, for holding up something that is collapsing?' an inhabitant of this street asked us.

Generally, the soap bars that we hold in our lives are shaped for our hands. You could even say they are perfect objects to handle. Their shape, weight and roundedness are just made for that certain kind of mobility. Made for the body, twice over. You have entered this space through a soap door. Did you know that over time, soap sweats? Little pearls of oil start to form on their soapy bodies.

'I make heavy, to-be-demolished works that operate outside of the art market, but everything they do is in regards to commodities. They flirt with market aesthetics.' (E)

Living and working at the grace of foundations, moving from residency to residency, E makes artworks fit-to-space and negotiated-to-space. Sometimes the artworks cannot leave the art space in one piece, sometimes the artworks can only leave the art space in scraps. A friend once told E about this process of practicing on site: 'It's like taking a picture and then deleting it.'

Do I smell *new car*? I guess when one makes artworks at the grace of foundations, one cannot claim to operate outside art markets as well. Speaking of slippery things: you have entered this space through a soap door. A former inhabitant of this space shared with me her reading of the juxtaposition (proximity?) of the assumed(!) 'feminine' and 'masculine' connotations of the materials used by E. We could not help but read a gendered politic into the presence of the kitchen in the title of the exhibition. It led us towards thinking about the role that assumptions—and their slippages—play in understanding. Assumption as something *lathered* (and then rinsed?).

I once found this wooden block from a children's play set at my parents' house. Inscribed on the block with felt tip pen, in rugged, children's handwriting, was the sentence *JOKE EN LEX VUKEN IN DE KEUKEN*. An inscribed, moveable block. I think that *JOKE EN LEX VUKEN IN DE KEUKEN* hints at the infamous Dutch saying *Neuken in de keuken*. *VUKEN* leads me to the word 'fucken', going somewhere like, 'to fuck'. Slippery language. Then *JOKE EN LEX* are my parents, and *KEUKEN* means kitchen.

The block must be approximately twelve by seven by two centimeters, and about the weight of a sturdy bar of soap. Though my parents have moved the block with them from home to home over the past thirty-plus years, it recently went missing. The sentence's watery red ink had been slowly dissolving into the wood over time anyway, but on a recent quest to uncover its existence the whole block had dissolved completely. It was no longer displayed in the glass vitrine, not perched on the decor-laden kitchen shelves, not even in the stool-turned-coffin that only contains wooden building blocks for children. I guess I have the desire to call this short story *Soapy bodies or moveable architecture*, or

*Your mind is a house and you live in the kitchen,
Your mind is a house and you live in the kitchen,
Your mind is a house and you love in the kitchen.*

*This text, which accompanies Evita Vasiljeva's exhibition *Your mind is a house and you live in the kitchen*, was written by Tirza Kater and is part of an ongoing conversation between Vasiljeva and Kater—one that sits at the intersection of Vasiljeva's residency-cum-exhibition at Marwan, Amsterdam, and Kater's research on domesticity, and was edited by Isabelle Sully.

Your mind is a house and you live in the kitchen
Evita Vasiljeva

at Marwan
2.11–1.12.2019

List of works:

Soap Opera I-III, 2019 , steel rods, screws, cable ties, soap, pigments, plastic, paper, insects, pills, matches, wire, scent, chocolate

HOME, 2019, steel rods, concrete, rope, paint, steel

Homeostasis, 2019, concrete, steel rods, plastic, steel, marker, chalk

Untitled, 2019, steel rods, rope, flies, chocolate, screws, inkjet print on paper

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