

Concept Proposal for RAM GALLERI OSLO 2021/22

Stephanie Imbeau

Procession

curated by Vanessa Souli

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Ethereal, crafty and adaptable; Stephanie Imbeau's works are the bodification of how an artwork can come to life and set itself onto the quest of searching for its own identity, substance and connection to other living beings. Imbeau's works propose a new kind of such a connection – with the human body itself and the space in which they exist and move.

Imbeau's work for this exhibition is comprised of five house-shaped lightweight sculptures, draped in white fabric with gold embellishments, accompanied by a series of photo documentations. In her work, craft, sculpture and design become one whilst responding to a growing tendency for sustainability and multi-purpose design. The work has aesthetic but also functional features which lend it flexible, almost choreographic properties. The sculptures can be worn, displayed on the floor as free-standing sculptures or hung from the ceiling.

Having staged the wearable houses in different settings – in the city, in the countryside, on the street – in partly recognisable, partly unclassifiable places, Imbeau enhances the enigmatic story-telling of the work while perplexing its visual reception. The body and the artwork enter a dialogue, blurring the limits between *performer* and *performed*, *agent* and *recipient*. Corresponding to Gell's¹ theory that 'art is a medium for energy transferences', Imbeau uses the body as a communication vessel only to transpond the energy of the artwork – there are no faces to be seen, no bodies to be judged, no biases to be applied. The relation between performer and audience shifts, as the images are the only witnesses of the action, and the circumstances of creation remain in the raw space of imagination and creative speculation.

From the impermanence of their natural performative identity, the wearable houses can then be seen as sculptures in the exhibition space. As sculptures, the wearable houses leave their status as bodified concepts and shift into the realm of materiality as they can be supported by pedestals on the floor or hung from the ceiling using a self-made construction, while offering the chance to the public to interact with, move through, ponder and touch them.

As an arts and crafts gallery, RAM galleri is an ideal place to present Imbeau's works. We would kindly ask you to use both rooms to showcase both the journey of creation (photo documentation) and the final product (lit sculptures). The concept wants to invite interaction in a playful and visually engaging manner.

¹ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)