

MOM,
LET ME BE AN ANIMAL
FOR ONE DAY

Gabriela Ayza



TOMAS REDRADO ART

8163 N.E. 2nd Avenue

Miami, Florida, 33138

Text and design by Concha Gavilán.

Critical analysis by Adriana Herrera Téllez.

Traduction by Luna Palazzolo.

MOM, LET ME BE AN ANIMAL FOR ONE DAY

It's here. It's the moth. And it is coming straight from Gabi's journal. And from her chest, that gazes and trembles with fleshy eyes. Or maybe from desire: to lose sight in order to be with her an animal.

Jailed and barefoot we attend the ceremony. To pray to flowers that are shrines, to immolate birds fed up with grief, to conjure butterflies hiding per meters and sheets or, if we are lucky, to sing to spiders that dance while still hanging.

Mom, let me be an animal for one day it's the threshold to a world of instinct, domination and thirst. The artist observes and empathizes how humans are, measurably, beasts and brutes.

She circles them because deep down also loves them. And who hasn't, sometimes?

Bluntly, she questions why humanity hides its bestiality: What is so dangerous about our depths?

Nothing, nothing, nothing.

Concha Gavilán



FLORIST

FLOWERS

The plants see, remember and scream when they are being cut.
We cannot listen, imnoted by their beauty.



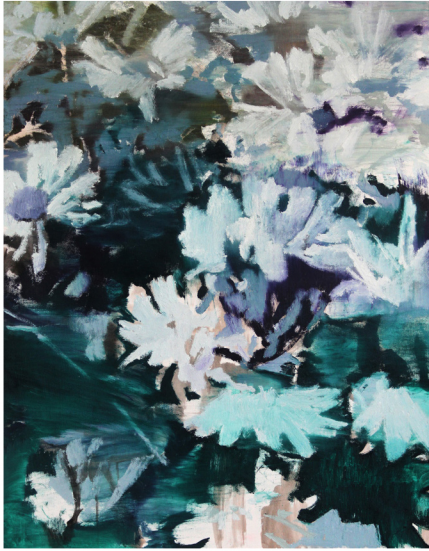
SAHIRA / 2022. Oil on linen. 24 x 30 in.



WIE SCHÖN, DASS DU GEBOREN BIST / 2022. Oil on linen. 24 x 30 in.

NARDOS DE CADIZ / 2022. Oil on linen. 24 x 30 in.





CAROLA / 2022. Oil on linen. 24 x 30 in.

ASUNCIÓN 8. 4IZQ. / 2022. Oil on linen. 24 x 30 in.



NIGHT SICKNESS / 2022. Oil on linen. 26 x 21 in.



BIRDS

About 40% of the squabs leave the nest in the middle of their development.

The bride, it's a new home



LORENZO / 2022. Oil on linen. 46 x 58 in.

CATALINA / 2022. Oil on linen. 46 x 58 in.



MOTHS

Will we be butterflies of the night?

Moths always go towards the light. In Spain the moon is called Catalina and the sun Lorenzo, with a story of romance behind them.

Many moths burn in light bulbs believing they have reached the moon, Catalina, love.





SILK HOUSE / 2022. Oil on linen. 46 x 34 in.



SPIDERS

I can see her in the pit of the stomach making of me her
silk house.

CATS

Cats are characterized by lack of empathy, antipathy towards animals or the human being itself





HABIBI / 2022. Oil on linen. 22 x 17 in.

ÁTAME A LAS ROSAS / 2022. Oil on linen. 63 x 63 in.



Gabriela Ayza Aschmann: Her Call to (a Wild) Light

The Spanish-German artist Gabriela Ayza Aschmann (Cologne, Germany, 1991) has created a series of paintings in this 2022 of the third millennium, as an experience that strengthens her, as a viscerally sustained practice that she carries out by painting on the background of the history of the avant-garde since post-impressionism, but, above all, as one who tears pages from her own life, to add them to art. Her paintings contain autobiographical clues, including revealing –sometimes transgressive– handwritten phrases in the margins, and have a specular function: they are images of herself from self-portraits or the found faces of other women. But they are also portraits of the ontological nature of herself and, at the same time, of other men and women mimicked with the body of other animals and plants, reflecting a generation born and formed between multiple modes of dislocation. They are paintings that oscillate between figuration and abstraction, that swing between the creation and destruction of forms and their meanings; paintings that are tense with the forces of other poetic voices rooted in her own flesh.

She seeks a language capable of enunciating a truth she does not possess, but which she pursues relentlessly in each stroke and figure; she is willing to represent again and again the desire of bodies, but she also encrypts in her language signs of disenchantment. Thus, to descend into the abyss of the human condition, she travels the distances that separate us from the other realms to paint in the images of plants or insects her own reflection –or that of the entire human species–. Like Frida Khalo, who portrayed the hardest moments of her life in still life paintings, Gabriela Ayza paints herself as one who binds her being to flowers, sisters of herself, knowing that the immortal spirit is in all beings. And in that, she is not so far from the *Canticle of the Creatures of Saint Francis of Assisi*.

She is enraptured by the readings of Leopoldo María Panero, the Spanish poet who decided to live in an asylum and wrote from the edge of madness a poetry that was pure in its cutting truth. "A cockroach runs through the humid garden/ of my room and circulates among the empty bottles: I look into its eyes and I see your two blue eyes, mother mine," wrote Panero. Gabriela photographs them, in the common grave of the apartment she found when she entered alone into a new room of her own life. Her multiple attempts to express a language that emerged from facing existence instant by instant, take up in their own way the saga of her predecessors in the history of art: those female artists –like Marlene Dumas, Kiki Smith, or Tracey Emin, for example– who since decades ago used painting (among other media), particularly of the body, as an anatomy of their

emotional life, and as a means to make erotic-affective dissections that contain the ethos and contradictions of contemporary culture.

Gabriela Ayza has aseptically renounced any idea of separating art and life. She lets images from the archive of her own life creep into her artistic fictions and in her desire to see it without masks, with all the required rawness, and with a total thirst for something beautiful, she resorts to looking through a meticulous magnifying glass –sometimes so close that it produces a distorted vision– and leans over herself to observe her own self, and to portray that self even in the close-ups of flowers. She pursues and finds herself in neo-expressionist paintings, where she shows herself not only unfolded in other bodies that are mirrors or doubles of herself but in the still life of flowers that have bled –she is sure of that– when they are cut. Perhaps she thinks they can utter words as unintelligible as they are terrifying, but also, she leans in painting them over her image to listen to an encrypted message, perhaps something important that flowers and plants have to tell us.

Between the paint and the color-tinged blood, dripping in shapes that may have the appearance of a flower or a body, there are areas of stains, gestures that drip the expression of something that is never named (The extreme edges of his works –which can sometimes be seen on the sides– contain stains or words that are like small gateways to each scene). In any case, that which is not named is not "love", whose word is tattooed in the piece *Jowe* under the nipple of the portrait of a man surrounded by hairs that resemble what the title defines as the legs of a spider. Love, there, is a dark-headed spider on the chest of a headless man. In his recent paintings, the hands depicted are sometimes an undefined form that dilutes into another body without having the power to grasp, to touch in any work. They barely brush against other hands or do not appear in the field of vision, as in *Silk House*, where the arms are hidden under a black cloth, exposing the vaguely traced naked breasts. The pupils of the woman who looks at us in this work have a penetrating gaze that pierces through the layers of paint superimposed on the eyes. A Sapphic verse accompanies it: "I can see her in the pit of my stomach, making me her silken home". In *Night Sickness*, the hands appear raised, with the thumb renouncing its prehensile function, and are

¹ There is a resonance between Gabriela Ayza's works and previous portraits of Marlene Dumas such as *For Whom the Bells Tolls*, 2008, where the face of a young woman, depicted in a distorted, unnatural way in the foreground (Ingrid Bergman in the film of the same title), cries blood. See: *The Twenty First Century Art Book* (Phaidon Press Limited: London, 2014, 73). Gabriela also photographs herself doing a performance on a messy cot, burying herself between quilts, as a *mise en scène* of a segment from Tracey Emin's diary about the experience of finding someone you love in bed with someone else.

covered by the immense, incongruous yellow gloves of another woman, an alter-ego of the artist, who also cannot touch and who stares at us from the front, fixedly. But we do not see her face because a white bird covers her mouth.

The black silhouette of another bird covers the mouths of two girls who are kissing each other in the painting *At the End*, under an unnatural black background in which white birds seem to fly over as if cut out of paper. The contrasting effect of the composition is heightened by a profane phrase written in the margin: “Palabra hecha carne (Word made flesh).” On the side, in English, Gabriela engages in some wordplay: “Hope you are Good (with the first o crossed out).” So, one of the two girls, perhaps the one with closed eyes and bare chest, is making the other –with open eyes and covered skin– a religion. Or the opposite. The contrast between the features of both portraits anticipates, in contradiction to the statement, the fall of idolatrous illusion. Seeing these well-composed paintings, I remember a phrase of Gabriela’s about the human body: “That prison of solitude where in some distant corner resides one’s own identity.” But there are also celebratory images, such as one of the most beautiful flower paintings, entitled, in German, “wie schön, dass du geboren bist” (How wonderful that you were born). In another, a spot of fiery orange illuminates a tranquil painting of a close-up of pale Cadiz flowers, which are, according to a handwritten phrase in the margin, an offering to the Virgin.

There are stains or shapes that cover and close the senses in several portraits and perhaps they are expressions of the longing to cross them until one touches something else, which sometimes reflects the words found in the margins. There is something else that the dark dragonflies that perch like flowers on the roundness of the buttocks in *Call to Luck* are looking for, where the small red spots indicate the female sex and are painted as a segment of pink ignition, something that perhaps the red flowers of the underwear that cover the detail of a pubis in another painting of intense carnality are unable to find. For if the tongue of desire were the only one to articulate its message, nothing would cloud the eyes, hands would touch, nothing would seal the mouths. Instead, as she handwrites: “It is always about the body that wants to escape (...) the only object of pity.” Above or below the signs of desire, the unattainable weighs.

The flesh, turgid, so red, is also a matter of suffering, it is the space of combat in which a mode of negation or the shadow of something that is annihilated ends up being pronounced. Gabriela writes in the creation process of this series a scientific fact, as an entomological note, not alien to what lies in the subsoil of herself: “The snakehead butterfly, without oral cavity: its only objective is to reproduce itself, a task it decides as soon as it is born.” There is a completely

abstract work, of marvelous composition, made with small segments that evoke skins, from pale pink to deep brown, with drips and luminous zones of expanded white, that makes one think of the flesh, seen not only from within but from all the light of the mystery of life in the depths of time and is called *Never Mom*. Gabriela peeks in her painting, but also in a video connected to this painting, into the pink hole of the inner membranes as if she were reaching out into the void to grasp something she cannot touch. And she wants to dare to go to the most animal depths, to the confines of the visceral, to find something lit that illuminates her inside. She writes “Moths mistake artificial light for moonlight. They make a suicidal act” (to immerse themselves in it). So, the fluttering of death hovers over her paintings, as much as the call to touch the ungraspable and sacred of life.

Only once does Gabriela Ayza Aschmann explicitly name in this catalog that which leaks –sometimes in pink drips– from the flowers that evoke the relationship with the archetypal feminine, as much as the flowers that her ancestor, Aunt Oé, who was also a printmaking teacher, painted. Some are titled after certain places, and there is one in particular that bears the name of her grandmother, Carola, because Gabriela used to give her flowers. But the ones she paints now, sometimes on the basis of old archives, may contain abstract areas with stains that speak of the geography of the uncertain, or the red silhouette of empty petals. And they drip something that refers to the same feeling that is also contained in the sports surrounding the trans-personal paintings of two moths –entitled, respectively, Catalina and Lorenzo, names popularly given in Spain to the moon and the sun–: “Pain.”

Post-impressionism, neo-expressionism, painting-after-painting, photography, and transfers of graphic languages to pictorial media to build a fragmented poetics, loaded with irony, and crossed, even more than by desire, by the urgency of truth as an imperative to which her being –capable of feeling like a spider, a wolf, a bird, a moth without mouth, and flower that bleeds when cut– aspires. She likes Alejandra Pizarnik because she wrote without lying and quotes her poem *Boca enlutada* (Mourning Mouth) which speaks of her “mouth without a tongue/ prayer to no one.” And because she was able to name the pain of being, as in a line of hers, which Gabriela Ayza invokes in the title of one work: “Cry to me for being here/ cry to me and tie me to the roses.” But “pain” is a word that is also passion, and its flame contains what the artist recalls from Andrei Tarkovsky: “An impulse towards the infinite, towards the spiritual, towards the truly human” that is only communicable with images. There is beauty in her bleeding flowers even if she cuts the splashing drops and her still lifes contain only a faint trace of what

they suffer and/or utter. There is beauty in the gaze that is willing to burn when looking into the flame of the dark. And ascend to the light.

Adriana Herrera Téllez, Ph.D. Independent writer and curator



²Pain comes from the Latin passio ("suffering"), derived from passus, perfect passive participle of patior, pati ("to suffer"), a verb related to the Ancient Greek paskhein ("to suffer") and the noun pathos ("pain").



Gabriela Ayza Aschmann. Born in 1991 Cologne, Germany. She is a Spanish-German artist. She lived and studied in Andalusia, graduated from the University of Fine Arts in Seville and completed her training at the University of Fine Arts in Barcelona, Spain. Currently the artist is based in Miami, where she continues with her artistic career.

Presents a work that tells us about the search for the poetic, starting from the consideration that listening to ourselves and our environment brings us closer to the core of our existence. We can find in them humor, sweetness and hardness at the same time.

SOLO SHOW

- 2022 Mom, let me be an animal for one day, Tomas Redrado Gallery, Miami
- 2020 Tengo un idiota dentro de mí, Edge Zones Art center, Miami
- 2018 Soy colectiva, Sala Kstelar, Junta de Andalucía, Sevilla
- 2017 Figura y paisaje, Finca La Fronda, Alájar, Huelva

GROUP SHOW

- 2023 Wet, Tunel gallery, Miami
- 2020 72H, Galeria Zunino, commissar Guillermo Amaya, Sevilla
- 2019 XII National Painting Competition Casimiro Sainz, Cantabria
- 2019 La conquista del espacio, Sevilla
- 2018 The Woman Being, Valencia

MURAL

- 2020 Impermanence, Urbanism Summit in Collaboration with Void Projects, commissar Axel void, Miami
- 2020 Home mural festival, Void Projects, Miami
- 2019 In wall we trust Festival internacional de Street art, Napoli, Italy

RESIDENCES

- 2021 Gøtulist føroyar, Faroes Island, Denmark
- 2020 Void Projects, Miami

TOMAS REDRADO GALLERY
tomasredrado@gmail.com