

UNDERNEATH

19.09.2020–23.01.2021

MARIA PASENAU (NO)

Exhibition room: Hvelving

1. NO REGRETS! *Wall relief*
2. my smiley *Silk print on mirror*
3. Protesting Nodding Doll
4. Three Photos: 1) The painter 2) The haiker 3) The end

Maria Pasenau is arguably the hottest sensation to come out of the Norwegian art scene in recent years. Pasenau activates the medium of photography to artistically engage with modern digital visual culture. Creating a conceptual archive, documenting her autobiographical exploration of identity and also exposing an intimate, raw and conflicted community, where Pasenaus lens gains access to her confidential circle of friends, while toying with manifestations of popular culture. The presence of actors from the TV series SKAM in many of her photos, ultimate protagonists in Nordic youth culture, is an example of this. Even though Pasenaus photographs may be described as "impulsive snapshots of situations she shared with her friends", the artistic rigour and technical deliberation with which she executes her photographic vision, bare witness to an highly aesthetic approach that questions the very state of photography in the contemporary world, where the abundance of selfexhibiting digital visual material is overwhelming. Pasenaus explicit rendering of themes pertaining to gender and sexuality are a staple feature of her world, where menses, dildos, female pubic hair, drag, sex, and nudity are central motifs. Her empowering use of her own female body gains exhilarating strength in an age where nude photographs both serve as an currency for establishing intimacy and can turn into weapons of public shaming in the blink of an eye.

"I have always experimented with identity: if something happens in my life, I want to celebrate it by dyeing my hair or buying new clothes. You can see the passage of time in the photographs from the colour of my hair. One time I coloured my hair black. The next day I was stopped by the police for tagging in the street. So then I knew it wasn't good to keep my hair that colour. I've wanted to play with identity all my life. It's always been like that for me."

—Maria Pasenau

"Instagram is not my art world. It's just my Instagram, much like everyone else's. I want my pictures on a wall, not on Instagram. I want to be more in the world, not scrolling through a screen. I have a strong feeling I have so little time, so I have to use it carefully. I could die at any time. And I want to have my voice out there. Because if I die and my work goes into a box... Well, that's the worst thing I can imagine."

—Maria Pasenau

BIO

Maria Pasenau (Mjøndalen, 1994) is a contemporary artist who works in Oslo. She studied at the Norwegian School of Photography in Trondheim. Some of her recent solo exhibitions include «Whit Kind Regrets Pasenau» (2018, Makeriet, Malmö, Sweden), «My Name is End, Bitter End» (2018, K4 Gallery, Oslo) and «Pasenau and the Devil» (2019, Fotogalleriet, Oslo). She has been part of numerous group exhibitions such as «Early Works» (2017, curated by Elise By Olsen, New Galerie, Paris, France), «The Hoodies» (2017, curated by Charlie Roberts, Kristiansand Kunsthall, Kristiansand), «Faithless Pictures» (2018, curated by Andrea Kroksnes, Norwegian National Museum, Oslo), «Pinkcube» (2018, curated by Anja Carr, Tenthaus, Oslo) and «Sub» (2018, curated by Bjørn Hatterud, Akerhus Kunstsenter, Lillestrøm). Additionally, Maria Pasenau has appeared in Bjarne Melgaard's digital exhibition «Life Killed My Chihuahua» on the Instagram account of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac (2018, curated by Elise By Olsen and Julia Peyton-Jones). In 2018 Pasenau published her first photo book «Whit Kind Regrets Pasenau», and in 2019 in connection with her exhibition at Fotogalleriet, she published her second photo book «Pasenau and the Devil» and in 2020 her third book «The Hoplessness Of Beeing Alive». She is one of the youngest artists to have work acquired by the Norwegian National Museum for their permanent collection.