

Becky Beasley

H. S. P. (or Promising Mid-Career Woman)

Opening 27 November, 12 – 19 h

November 27, 2021 – February 5, 2022

Tuesday – Saturday, 12 – 18 h

Potsdamer Strasse 77-87, 10785 Berlin

Galeria Plan B is pleased to announce the second solo exhibition of Becky Beasley with the gallery.

H. S. P. (or Promising Mid-Career Woman) is a coming-out exhibition by mid-career British artist Becky Beasley. *H. S. P.* expresses the joys and complexities of an entirely autistic life understood only in retrospect. Through the sensitivities of photographic, ceramic, and linen surfaces, the three centrepieces of *H. S. P.* are installations through which the paradoxes of the human need for intimacy manifest in alternatives that have become Beasley's trademark minimal approach to art making. How to live, how to speak, how to be together, how to be alone.

H. S. P. – an acronym for Highly Sensitive Person¹ – is a lyric to sensitive surfaces and to the highly individual process of being a person in the world. The insistence of individual presence is expressed in the reverse printed negative – often present in Beasley's practice, – but here expressed repeatedly, insistently across the exhibition. *BACK!*, she insists. *BACK! BACK! BACK! BACK! BACK! BACK!*

The reprise of Beasley's last show at Galeria Plan B, '*Depressive Alcoholic Mother*' (2018), in the form of the linoleum floor-work, *Highly Sensitive Person*, is an intentional déjà vu. The slight disorientation therein offers a tangible, uncanny experience of her own experience of late-diagnosis autism in the winter of 2020. Her personal research over the last two years led her deep into the fields of international medical negligence in female and hormonal healthcare and the ongoing misdiagnoses of atypical neurology.

Undiagnosed progesterone intolerance and masked autism. Words are so clean. How do the societal effects of this manifest individually? Debilitating depression, serial burnout, exhaustion, stigmatization, bullying, gas lighting, social death – not being experienced by others as a person – social exclusion and bewilderment². Being endlessly bewildered by others is terrifying. To be bewildered is, etymologically and experientially, to be sent into a wild place without road map. It is to be astray in oneself. Beasley describes her late autism diagnosis as '*possibly one of the strangest of happy endings*' – *not exactly happy and certainly no end.*

One possible response to, '*Back!*', is, '*From where?*' A pair of small gelatin silver-prints of a striped shirt hang tenderly, *back to back* within the two spaces created by an 'H' shaped curtain structure. A 25-year-old, un-exhibited photograph, *Me as Andy* (1996), made by Beasley at the age of 20, shows her made up, wearing a wig, looking directly at the camera. A photograph of a 1930's ceramic Ilford photographic film processing tank hangs alongside *Me as Andy*, within the intimacy of curved spaces of an 'S' shaped curtain structure. The photographic series, '*BACK!*' is formed of seven life-sized photographs of a German-branded glossy black paint pot – used to paint her early sculptures for photographs made in Berlin in the early 2000's – each of which has been toned a muted colour, creating a uniquely personalized pastel 'rainbow' which circles the walls of the gallery's main room. Beasley's 'over the rainbow' palette comes not from Disney, but from an inter-war watercolour by British artist, Eric Ravilious's, '*The Bedstead*' (1939). *Back*, she insists, is *here*, in all our returns, and the exhibition a celebration of diverse collective recoveries.

¹*The Highly Sensitive Person* by Elaine N. Aron first published in 1999

² For similar, incredible accounts of late-diagnosis autism in those who identify as female, listen to *The Squarepeg Podcast*: <https://squarepeg.community/podcast/>

Beasley took up ceramics in 2019. Fascinated by the direct malleability of its form in relation to the imaginary and its potential for surface chemistry application – akin in ways to the chemistries of the photographic surface – *H. S. P.* includes her ceramic artwork for the first time in exhibition in the form of small assemblages of books and ceramics. Books – novels, mainly, often in abstracted, ergonomic forms – have been central to Beasley’s practice and here they appear as themselves, as a set of influences, whimsical guides and supports.

‘Yes, please cut up the pieces for me,’ he said, ‘but don’t chew them.’

The Notebooks of Joseph Joubert, 1797

The installation of four low, tabular sculptures, *Me & You (1975-2021)*, in the final room of the gallery, were conceived in connection to a print edition by Christopher Williams for Koenig Books, which Beasley bought in 2018. At nearly two metres wide, the print was always going to be too big for her small home and she spent time imagining cutting it into pieces that would *fit* better. Of her decision to cut the print into four equal parts and incorporate them into sculptures, Beasley has written:

I like it best like this, not mine, in four pieces, inside a table, under my small sculptures, in a room, with other people around it, people I don’t know. This is ideal now.

The ceramic and photographic assemblages which sit under glass atop each of the table structures were created over time as a result of overhearing a yoga instructor refer to ‘the back of the heart’. For Beasley, this is an image which continues to fascinate her imagination.

Finally, in response to Beasley’s polite communication to Christopher Williams’ gallery regarding her intention to cut and exhibit his print edition, Williams responded generously by also sending her another print, a poster this time. The work, *‘Me & You 1975-2021’*, is her response to this gift, engaged through a series of light, yet decisive gestures: she rotated the poster 180 degrees, erased all the text content with a black marker pen, and framed the print in a rosewood frame under pale green glazing. The work is hung on the third, ‘P’ shaped, curtain structure.

A collaborative text written by Becky Beasley and Anna Gritz to accompany the exhibition will be available from the gallery.

Special thanks from the artist to Christopher Williams.

Becky Beasley (b. 1975, UK) is a mid-career artist who has participated in numerous international exhibitions, among them 80WSE Gallery (NYU), New York; Towner Gallery, Eastbourne; South London Gallery, London; Leeds City Gallery, Leeds; Spike Island, Bristol; Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, London; Tate Britain, London; Stanley Picker Gallery, London; Whitworth, Manchester; Bluecoat, Liverpool; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Kunstverein Freiburg; Kunstverein Munich; Kunsthalle Bern. She received a Paul Hamlyn Award in 2018.

For more information, please contact the gallery at contact@plan-b.ro and +49.30.39805236.