

Adeleine St 'Ivana Basic @ Annka Kultys Reviewed', Aqnb, (September 2016)

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by [Adeleine St](#) on 26/09/2016
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The nape of the neck, a jagged rib, flesh that could once have been a hand, the nub of a heel, oscillating between foetal and decaying. The figures in Serbian artist **Ivana Basic**'s solo show *Throat Wanders Down the Blade*, running at **Annka Kultys** September 7 to October 8, are caught between becoming and unbecoming, stepping in and out of interiority.

The show is based on the voice of Basic's alter ego, 'Bridle', and features a series of seven blown glass bubbles mounted and scattered around the walls of the room, titled 'Breath seeps through her tightly closed mouth #1-#7'. Suggestive of air being squeezed out of a balloon or an organ, some almost breathing themselves, they graduate in colour from flesh to beige and milk.

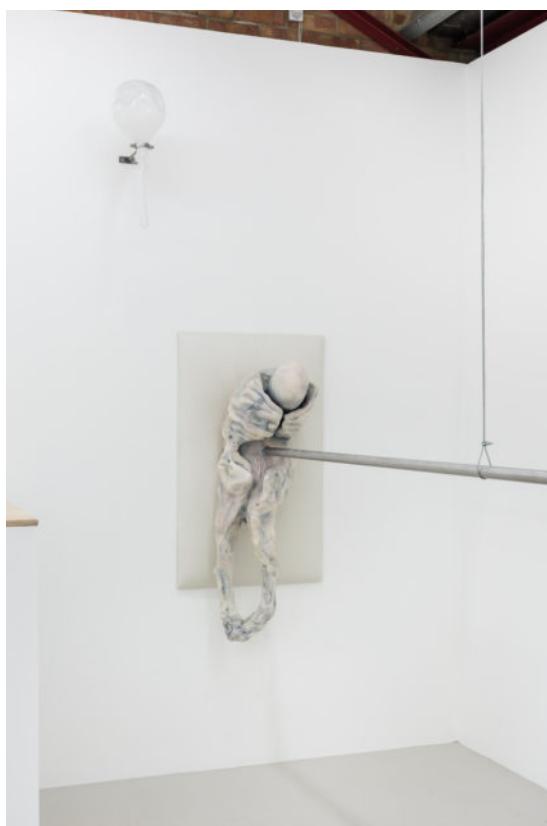


Ivana Basic, 'Throat Wanders Down the Blade,' (2016). Installation view. Courtesy the artist + Annka Kultys gallery, London.

When Basic lists breath as material, she refers to her own, having blown the glass herself. Trailing off in long jellyfish drops or twisted uncomfortably, the evidence remains of a liquid turned solid; by sacrificing its fluid malleability, it becomes fragile and permanent. The balloons are clamped to the gallery wall in a steel vise-grip evoking wall sconces. The dim palette of pinks and greys are barely colours at all, evoking a simultaneous awareness of and separation from the body, a feeling of weight.

‘Stay inside or perish’, three works speaking to Basic’s childhood in Serbia during wartime, feature deformed wax figures, genderless bodies touched by injury. The exhibition catalogue features drawings of bodies alongside the artists text – one dark body inside another, like scaffolding. Basic’s withered, clawing forms seem unable to hold themselves without support. Nothing can move, everything is clamped or strapped, the steel supports and bandage-like cloth both raising trapping.

The bodies in ‘Population of phantoms resembling me’ carry the sense of being cornered; forced by heavy steel bars up against leather pads mounted on opposite walls of the gallery. However, the engraved ‘R’ and ‘L’ of the metal arms that separate them almost connect, creating an umbilical bond across the space. Nothing is languid, everything is taut and on edge, from the tightening rivets and bars to the ties that bind the torso in ‘Stay inside or perish’. In both works, it’s hard to define which force is impressing itself upon the bodies, tension and torque operating simultaneously as crushing or potentially liberating.



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The materials of breath, pressure, weight, and rigidity move alongside the twist and warp of figures in the process of rebirth or disappearance that speak to the emerging internal selves of the character Bridle. The name conjures a double meaning: wedded, or submitting to as well as being shackled like an animal.

The central work in the show, 'Stay Inside or Perish', possesses a pair of glass ankles affixed to its hanging legs either held up or shackled down with steel crutches. The figure feels as though it's being suspended against its will, perhaps a glass-legged cyborg being raised back up into productive mode. In their various interminable states, the dry, hollow bodies could still be reparative; states of flux moving through on their way, perhaps, to other forms.**

Ivana Basic's *Throat Wanders Down the Blade* is running at London's Annka Kulty September 7 to Oct 8, 2016.

Header image: Ivana Basic, 'Throat Wanders Down the Blade,' (2016). Installation view. Courtesy the artist + Annka Kultys gallery, London.