

Frida Orupabo, *How fast shall we sing*

Are you sure, sweetheart, that you want to be well? [...] A lot of weight when you're well [...] Just so's you're sure, sweetheart, and ready to be healed, cause wholeness is no trifling matter.

Toni Cade Bambara's *The Salt Eaters*

Titeln på Frida Orupabos utställning, *How fast shall we sing*, är hämtad ur ett 1950-talsnummer av *The In-structure*, Church of Latter Day Saints officiella tidskrift i USA. Frågan anspelar på en kyrkokörs påtvingande tempo som i utställnings-sammanhanget för tankarna till den unika amerikanska svarta, kristna musiken som kallas för Spirituals, en förening av afrikanskt kulturarv och upplevelser av slaveri.

I dessa nya verk utforskar Orupabo den paradoxala personan, den starka svarta kvinnan, som i sin idealisering samtidigt skymmer rasismens djupa sår. Som den portugisiska konstnären Grada Kilomba konstaterar: "Efter att man har avidealiserats blir man idealiserad, och bakom denna idealisering ligger faran för en andra alienation. I båda processer förblir man ett svar på en kolonial ordning" (Ur *The 'super strong Black woman' and the silent suggesting*, Briarpatch, 2021).

Orupabos figurer bär ären av sina berättelser. De är deformerade och omformade, frigjorda från gränserna för sina fotografiska likheter. Figureerna som befolkar Orupabos fysiska collage och digitala montage (som utgör hennes instagramflöde @nemiepeba) har framför allt hämtats från nätet. Konstnären utvinnet material från tematiska och svårtillgängliga arkiv, såväl som från mer utspridda hålor online.

Utöver det stora antalet skildringar från digitala kataloger lånar Orupabo från så breda källor som vintagemofotografier, Louise Bourgeois och renässansmålningar från 1300-, 1400- och 1500-talen. Hon använder möjligheterna till kroppsliga förskjutningar och den återmontering som är inneboende i collageteknik, för att förflytta sina matriarkala figurer i anakronistiska förhållanden, kläder och poser. Hennes process återuppräftar dem som självständiga protagonister i sina egna berättelser.

Frida Orupabo föddes 1986 i Sarpsborg, Norge och bor och arbetar i Oslo. Hon har haft soloutställningar på bland annat Fotomuseum Winterthur (2022); Museo Afro Brazil, São Paulo (2021); Kunsthall Trondheim, Trondheim (2021); Huis Marseille, Amsterdam (2020), Portikus, Frankfurt och Kunsternes Hus, Oslo (båda 2019). Orupabo deltog i den 58:e upplagan av Venedigbiennalen (2018) samt den 34:e São Paulo-biennalen (2021). Tillsammans med Ming Smith och Missylanyus, visade Orupabo sina verk i Arthur Jafas utställning *A Series of Utterly Improbable, Yet Extra Ordinary Renditions* på Moderna Museet i Stockholm, Galerie Rudolfinum i Prag (båda 2019), Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin (2018) och Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London (2017).

Orupabos första monografi publicerades av Sternberg Press i samband med hennes utställning på Kunsthall Trondheim 2021. Boken innehåller omfattande dokumentation av hennes verk samt essäer av Stefanie Hessler, Lola Olufemi och Legacy Russell.

Hennes verk finns i samlingarna hos The Guggenheim Museum, USA, Studio Museum in Harlem, USA, Kadist Foundation, France / USA, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, Museum Ludwig, Germany, Moderna Museet, Sweden, Mumok, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Austria, Nasjonalmuseet, Norway, Perez Art Museum, USA, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Norway, 21C Hotel Museum, USA, A4 Arts Foundation, South Africa, Alexander Tutsek-Foundation, Germany, Dean Collection, USA, Scheryn Collection, South Africa, Turku Art Museum, Finland, Zabłudowicz Collection, UK / Finland.

Vernissage: 31 mars, 17.00 – 20.00

Utställningsperiod: 1 april – 14 maj, 2022

Öppettider: tisdag – fredag 11.00 – 18.00, lördag 12.00 – 16.00

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The title of Frida Orupabo's exhibition, *How fast shall we sing*, originates from a 1957 issue of *The Instructor* - the official periodical for the Church of Latter Day Saints in the United States. The question suggests the forced tempo of a church choir and in the context of the exhibition evokes Black Spirituals - a uniquely Black American Christian music, which merges African cultural heritage with the experiences of being held in the bondage of slavery.

In these new works Orupabo explores the paradoxical persona of the Strong Black Woman which, in its idealization, simultaneously obscures the profound wounds of racism. As the Portuguese artist and writer Grada Kilomba states, "After one is de-idealized, one becomes idealized, and behind this idealization lies the danger of a second alienation. In both processes one remains a response to a colonial order." (From *The 'super strong Black woman' and the silent suffering*, Briarpatch, 2021).

Orupabo's figures bear the scars of their stories. They are de-formed and re-formed, unshackled from the confines of their photographic likenesses. The figures that populate Orupabo's physical collages and digital montages (that constitute her Instagram feed @nemiepeba) are mainly found on the internet. The artist trawls material from thematic and arcane archives as well as the wider, more diffuse flotsam and jetsam of online imagery.

In addition to the wealth of portrayals from digital catalogs, Orupabo borrows from sources as broad as vintage fashion photoshoots, Louise Bourgeois and Renaissance paintings from the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. She uses the possibilities of corporeal dislocation and reassembly inherent to collage to relocate her matriarchal figures in anachronistic conditions, clothes and reposes. Her process restores them to sovereign protagonists of their own stories.

Frida Orupabo was born 1986 in Sarpsborg, Norway, and lives and works in Oslo. Solo exhibitions include Fotomuseum Winterthur (2022); Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo (2021); Kunsthall Trondheim, Trondheim (2021); Huis Marseille, Amsterdam (2020); Portikus, Frankfurt am Main and Kunsternes Hus, Oslo (both 2019). Orupabo participated in the 58th Venice Biennale exhibition (2018) as well as the 34th São Paulo Biennial (2021). Together with Ming Smith and MissyLanyus, Frida Orupabo presented her work in Arthur Jafa's exhibition "A Series of Utterly Improbable, Yet Extraordinary Renditions" at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague (both 2019), Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin (2018), and Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London (2017).

Frida Orupabo's first monograph was published by Sternberg Press on the occasion of her exhibition at Kunsthall Trondheim 2021. The book contains extensive documentation of her work and essays by Stefanie Hessler, Lola Olufemi, and Legacy Russell.

Her work is included in the collections of The Guggenheim Museum, USA, Studio Museum in Harlem, USA, Kadist Foundation, France / USA, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, Museum Ludwig, Germany, Moderna Museet, Sweden, Mumok, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Austria, Nasjonalmuseet, Norway, Perez Art Museum, USA, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Norway, 21C Hotel Museum, USA, A4 Arts Foundation, South Africa, Alexander Tutsek-Foundation, Germany, Dean Collection, USA, Scheryn Collection, South Africa, Turku Art Museum, Finland, Zabłudowicz Collection, UK / Finland.

Vernissage: March 31, 17.00 - 20.00

Exhibition period: April 1 - May 14, 2022

Opening hours: Tuesday - Friday 11.00 - 18.00, Saturday 12.00 - 16.00