

# Andrea Éva Győri & Selma Selman

## Art Brussels 2024



Andrea Éva Györi: *Squeeze and Release*, 2023, exhibition view, acb Attachment, Budapest





Art Martket Budapest, 2023, exhibition view, Bálna, Budapest

For the Discovery section of Art Brussels, acb Gallery proposes a duo presentation focusing on the work of Andrea Éva Györi (1983-2022) and Selma Selman (b. 1991). Both artists' practices are characterised by a bold, outspoken yet sensitive approach to their own status, that of women who challenge societal frames, who decline stereotypical female roles and struggle for their body and mind to be sovereign lands. As both the formulation, the cathartic channelling and the strategic visualisation of anxiety, fear, illness, physical pain and despair, the – occasionally performative – drawings and paintings of Andrea Éva Györi and Selma Selman explore the artists' conflictual relation to womanhood, to the expectations surrounding their femininity and to their respective bodies. It is by transforming these very bodies that they succeed in freeing themselves from coercive societal stereotypes, in constructing a new identity, and ultimately focusing on their artistic selves. The works selected for this presentation convey a clear transformative power that acts as a visual strategy used by the artists to protect, heal and soothe their body and psyche.

- > see **Andrea Éva Györi** from page 5-18
- > see **Selma Selman** from page 19-34





Selma Selman: *Crossing the Blue Bridge*, 2024, exhibition view, Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg



Andrea Éva Győri  
(1982-2022)





Andrea Éva Györi's works at *BLIND FAITH Between the Visceral and the Cognitive in Contemporary Art*, 2018, exhibition view, Haus Der Kunst, Munich



# Andrea Éva Györi (1985, Budapest – 2022, Rotterdam)

studied painting at the fine art academies of Budapest and Stuttgart and was the recipient of several international scholarships and artist-in-residence opportunities. She worked in several media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, performance, and video. Györi's works focus on the mental and physical conditions of being a woman based on personal experiences. Her explorations have encompassed emotions, muscles, and organs, as well as their interrelations. In her performances and video works she frequently participated with friends and family, and collaborated on projects with individuals or groups involved in mental processes such as meditation or psychotherapy.

Györi's works have been shown at international institutions, including Haus der Kunst in Munich, Ludwig Museum in Budapest, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art in Middelburg, and Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht. She was an exhibitor at MANIFESTA 11 Zurich with her *Vibration Highway* project which was also published in the form of a book in 2018. In 2019 she received the Esterházy Art Award. In 2022, ARGOS Centre for Audiovisuals Arts in Brussels dedicated the exhibition *When the angels from above* to Györi's memory. In 2023 acb Gallery presented *Squeeze and Release*, her second solo exhibition at acb to commemorate the first anniversary of her passing. Her work was recently exhibited at the group shows of Kunsthalle Wien and Dordrechts Museum.

Andrea Éva Györi is represented by  
**acb Gallery** (Budapest, HU),  
**Harlan Levey Projects** (Brussels, BE),  
**Thomas Erben Gallery** (New York, USA)







*VIBRATION HIGHWAY*, a project Andrea Éva Györi prepared for the 2016 Manifesta 11's exhibition, *What People Do for Money*, and also presented at Munich's Haus der Kunst, illustrates Andrea Éva Györi's most typical working method well. This process-based work becomes accessible for the viewer thanks to the monumental pencil and aquarelle drawings - one of Györi's chief media - which were made by the artist during her research during her participation in an orgasmus workshop of a sexual psychologist in Zürich where a group of female were also participated. Intensive, eventful and vibrant, the scenes, (nude) studies and the drawings that resemble illustrations from books on sexual psychology, are also about the relatedness of imagination, visual fantasy and visualization. On the one hand, they look into the possibilities of the media of drawing (...), and on the other, they affect the creator herself (participants, artist), and as new things are placed in a different light, they become the means of self-study and self-understanding.

– Lili Boros: *Andrea Éva Györi: Phantasy after Analyses*  
In the catalog of Hungarian Month of Photography 2018



Exhibited works of Andrea Éva Győri





Traumatizing an Apple 1-7., 2019, watercolor, pencil on paper, 55,5 × 70 cm each



„The omnipotent eye drives the hands, which also have eyes on the fingers. The eyes are drifting everywhere. Like little radars. Squeezing the lemon [apple]. The main eye steers the hands and the scanning eyes. The eyes are for connections between the mind and the body. They see and tell what happens in the body. Through the squeezing of the lemon [apple], the eyes help to build an image of the body in the space of imagination. Help understand the relationship between active and passive, tension and release. The lemon [apple] has personality and feelings, emotions. The body wishes to understand these, in order to understand itself better.”

– Text by Andrea Éva Györi and Huib Hays van der Werf



*Traumatizing an Apple 1-7.*, 2019, watercolor, pencil on paper, 55,5 × 70 cm each





Andrea Éva Györi considers the relationship of body and mind as the reflection of personal and communal processes. She models relations that straddle the invisible line between life as an individual and as the member of a community. While not explicitly political, her works have inseparable social concerns: intimacy, sexual mores, manners, desires, entering into and maintaining relationships, intervention into the body (for medical purposes) –these are also issues/taboo that are controlled by social or political systems. Györi, however, is interested in how the individual functions in these frameworks, and consequently the pencil drawings, aquarelles, videos and sculptures, which often result from cooperation-based projects, have a personal tone and offer the possibility of participation. Her creative method is marked by a decidedly analytical method and a desire to get to the bottom of things.

– Lili Boros: *Andrea Éva Györi: Phantasy after Analyses*  
In the catalog of Hungarian Month of Photography 2018

*Cuffing an Unknown Body 1-5.*, 2018, watercolor and pencil on paper, 82 × 54 cm each





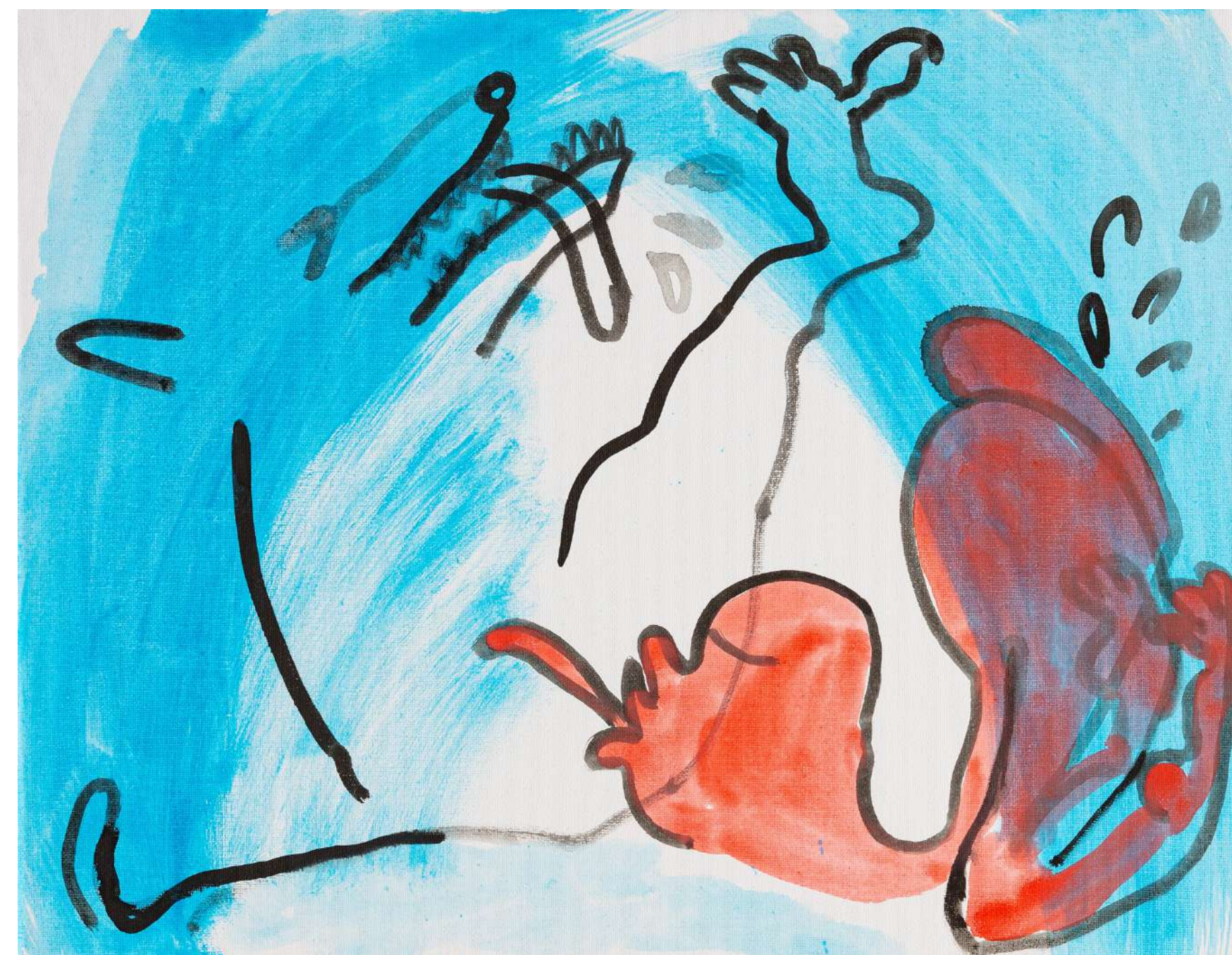
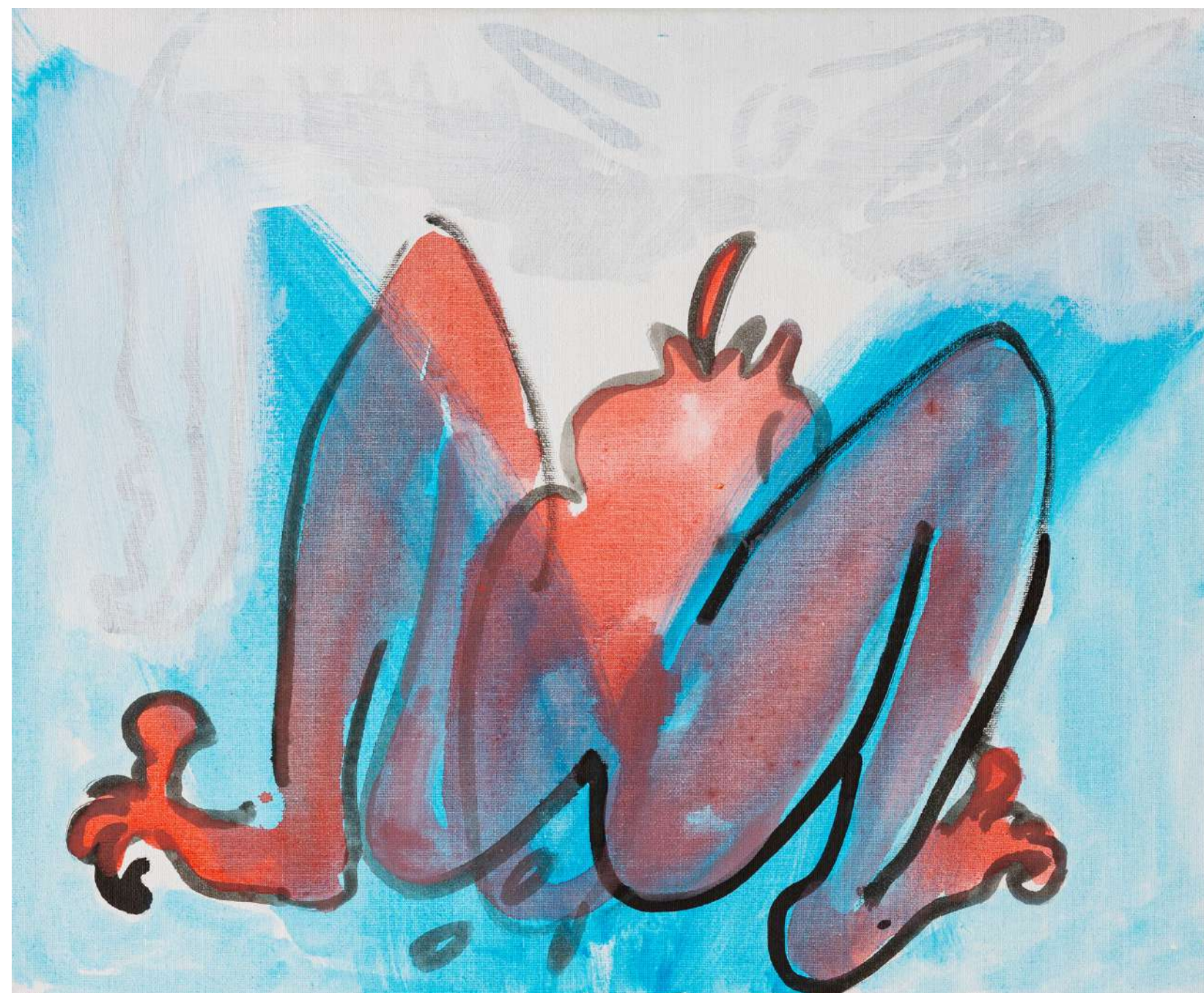
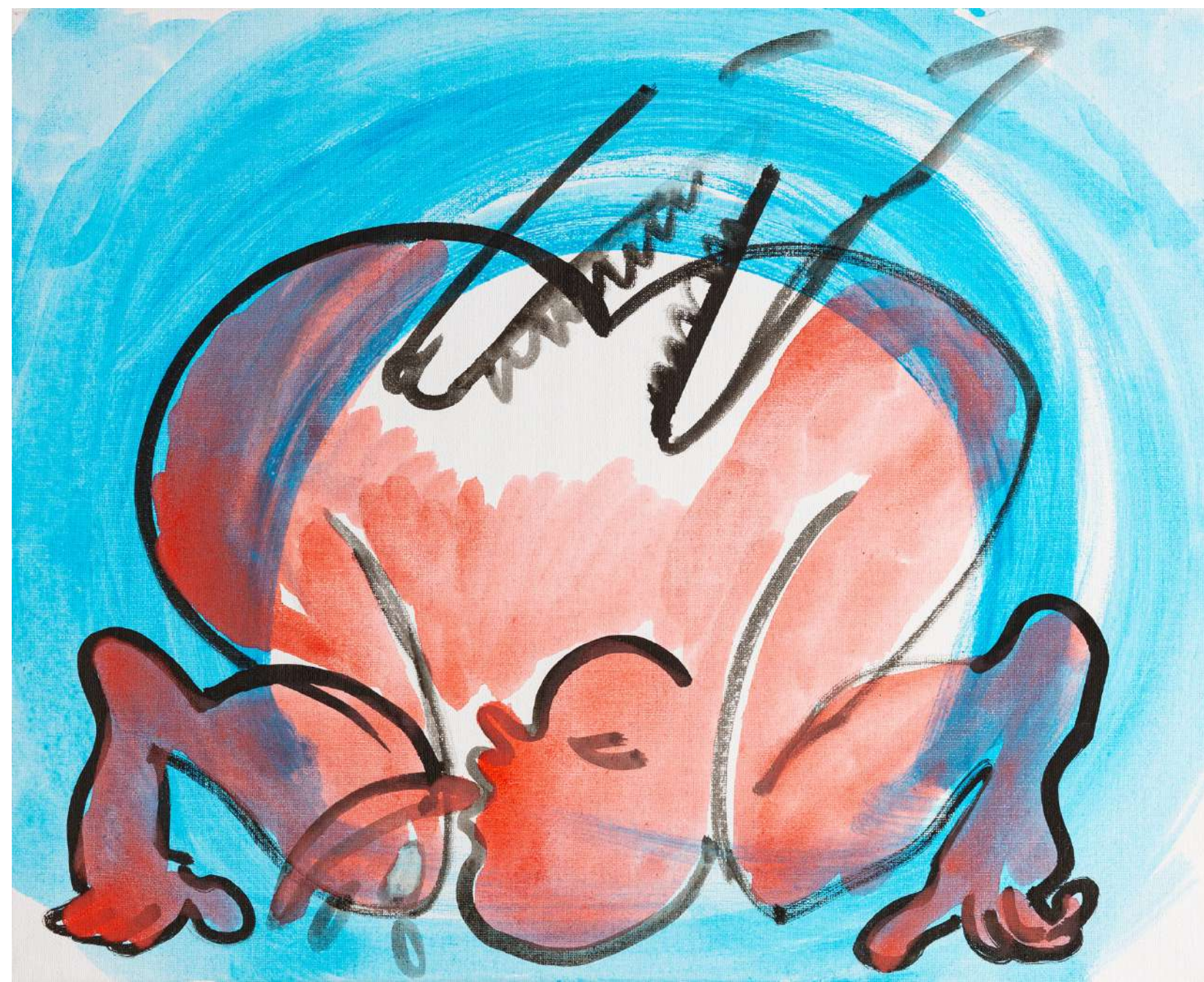
*Cuffing an Unknown Body 1-5.*, 2018, watercolor, pencil on paper, 82 × 54 cm each



Untitled 1-5., c. 2018-2019, gouache on canvas, 40 × 50 cm each







Untitled 1-5., c. 2018-2019, gouache on canvas, 40 × 50 cm each





*Lips 1.*, 2018, glazed ceramics, 10,5 × 38 × 17 cm





*Tongue 2.*, 2018, glazed ceramics, 16 × 33 × 22 cm

The ceramic *Lips* and *Tongue* sculptures whose chunky, undulating surfaces, bear the artist's fingerprints and handprints, convey the sensual experience of working with clay. These unfurling ceramic lips also bear the tension evident in the series of paintings and also represent one of the central themes of Györi's oeuvre: sexuality. The rhomboid, cavernous depressions between the red-painted, glossy glazed lips evoke the *vagina dentata* iconography: female genitalia framed by protruding, aggressive teeth. Tongues resembling a yellow and blue flag flutter between the lips of *Tongue 1-2*. The use of red, yellow, and blue is also the most common color combination in Andrea Éva Györi's watercolors, where red is usually used to depict lips and genitals as well as sexual arousal. The yellow color is usually associated with secretions produced by the human body – such as semen, vaginal discharge, sweat, saliva –, or often with disease, toxins, the (harmful) processes inside the body, such as the proliferation of cancer cells. Györi uses blue to indicate the energy field of the depicted bodies. In many cases, she also uses this color as a background for text bubbles, thus articulating the narrative representation in her compositions, and the blue color also symbolizes visions and imagination, thought in her works.

Luca Adamik: *Andrea Éva Györi: Squeeze and Release*  
[https://acbgaleria.hu/en/exhibitions/squeeze\\_and\\_release](https://acbgaleria.hu/en/exhibitions/squeeze_and_release)





Andrea Éva Györi: *Squeeze and Release*, 2023, exhibition view, acb Attachment, Budapest



Selma Selman

(b. 1991)





**Selma Selman** (1991, Ružica, Bosnia and Herzegovina) is one of the youngest and most exciting flag-bearers of a long tradition of critical and political performance from the ex-Yugoslav area, who works with performance, video, photography, drawing and painting. Her practice both embraces and blasts the stereotypes about Roma people by referring to her personal experience, life situations and stories, but also focuses on her own specific condition as a young woman artist of Roma origins from Bosnia. In her artworks, the ultimate aim is to protect and enable female bodies and enact a cross-scalar approach to collective self-emancipation of oppressed women. Her search for functional, contemporary political resistance has also led her to found *Get the Heck to School* in 2017, a socially engaged organisation aiming to empower Roma girls worldwide who face poverty and social ostracisation.

Selman earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2014 from Banja Luka University's Department of Painting. She studied sociology and anthropology at Central European University in Budapest before she graduated in 2018 from Syracuse University, New York with a Master of Fine Arts in Transmedia, Visual and Performing Arts. She currently lives and works between Bosnia, and the Netherlands, where she studied at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten. Selman participated in 2022 at Documenta 15 (Kassel, DE), and at the Manifesta 14 (Prishtina, XK). In 2021 the National Gallery in Sarajevo (BIH) launched a survey exhibition of her work. In the last few years Selman had several solo exhibitions, in 2022 at Kunstraum Innsbruck (A), in 2021 at Kasseler Kunstverein (DE) and participated in several group shows, in 2022 at Shedhalle (Zürich, CH), in 2021 at Art Encounters biennale (Timișoara, RO), in 2020 at Kunsthalle Wien (Vienna, A) and notably at the Roma Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2019 among others. Her comprehensive solo exhibition, *HerO* opened in 2023 at Gropius Bau (Berlin, DE) and her solo show titled *Crossing the Blue Bridge* is currently open at Röda Sten Konsthall (Göteborg, S).





Selma Selman: *Her0*, 2023, exhibition view and performance, Gropius Bau, Berlin



After being trained in painting, Selman chose metal waste as her artistic medium in order to question the perceived value and relations between metal waste, technology and art. Selma Selman's paintings on scrap metal are a personal visual diary composed of – sometimes symbolic – self-portraits, portraits of her family, depictions, notes and impressions of everyday life scenes in Bosnia, situations she was confronted to, as well as reference to characters or works from art history that have been determining for her. The scrap metal onto which she realizes these works is a reference to her family's struggling existence, her father collecting such metal pieces to sell them in order for his family to subsist. By using this material for her paintings, the artist transforms this seemingly useless surface into a conveyer of her message, her origins into a strong base to build on and to transcend misery, discrimination and stereotypes.

„I have always had a very personal relationship with metal as my family and I have been collecting and recycling it to sustain ourselves since my childhood. My latest paintings on scrap metal portray impressions of everyday life, references to art history and text collages. Humor, wordplay and my incessant probing of the boundaries of art fuse painting and sculpture into small intimate objects.”

– Selma Selman



Selma Selman performing *Motherboards* with her family at the opening of her solo show, *Her0*, 2023, Gropius Bau, Berlin



# Exhibited works of Selma Selman





Untitled, 2023, acrylic on scrap metal, 15 x 70 x 15 cm





*Untitled, 2023, acrylic on scrap metal, 50 × 50 cm*





*Untitled, 2023, acrylic on scrap metal, 4 × 50 × 15 cm*





Many of the works painted on metal resemble the tradition of concrete poetry: words are scattered across the surface in handwriting; other like the car pieces have a more painterly quality, with anthropomorphic imagery. For Selman, the appropriation of car hoods stands also as a critique of gender roles. Selman refers both to the re-appropriation feminist gestures and to the multilayered symbol that the car holds in her personal life and in minority cultures.

The Mercedes/BMW brand is a recurring presence in Selman's work. In the performance *Mercedes Matrix* (2019), accompanied by her Roma male family members, the artist dismantles a Mercedes Benz car. While she is appropriating the Mercedes, a symbol of male power and affluence and status across the Balkans, she is at the same time sharing and embracing the fragile narrative of labor within Roma communities and transforms their daily business into artistic labour, augmenting its symbolic value in the process. Questions of labour and economy are at the centre of this and other performative works by Selma Selman. The recycling of scrap metal in particular plays a pivotal role in her practice insofar as her family has supported itself in this way for generations. In several performances, she destroys metal goods, whether vacuum cleaners, washing machines or old computers to harvest the valuable parts. In her video pieces Selman has been using her own body, voice and identity as a medium for political resistance, feminist empowerment and collective self-emancipation, but also questioning the relationship between art, labour and economy, all this with a sensitive, harsh and ironic approach.

*Untitled*, 2023, acrylic on scrap metal, 50 × 40 cm





Untitled, 2024, oil on scrap metal, 133 × 150 × 25 cm



Her series of drawings form an intimate body of works as they reflect the struggle, sufferance and discomfort she experiences with her own female body and the numerous gender-based expectations, roles and attributes that society and especially her own family are attaching to it. Selma Selman's transcendental work is indeed full of tensions, rips and tears as she continuously tries to mend the wounds, narrow the tremendous gap between her origins – and all burdens that they mean for her – and her autonomous existence as a contemporary artist.



*Untitled, 2020-2021, color pencil on paper, 35,2 × 43 cm*





*Untitled, 2020-2021, color pencil on paper, 35 × 43,2 cm*



*Untitled, 2020-2021, color pencil on paper, 35,2 × 43 cm*





The drawings look surreal, dream-like; multiple body shapes melt into one another. They reveal a female character, which morphs from one entity into another, questioning notions of gender expression and internal personal identities. Escaping fixed definitions, the artist's protagonists are presented with distorted faces, unimaginable bodies and animal-like features. In this set of drawings, Selman continuously allows herself to explore the divisions of our world and confronts the language of antagonism with her own imaginary narratives of bodily longing.





*Untitled*, 2020-2021, color pencil on paper, 35,2 × 43,2 cm



*Untitled*, 2020-2021, color pencil on paper, 36 × 43,2 cm





Painting on metal, 2019-2020, acrylic on scrap metal, 95 x 95 cm





Selma Selman: *Motherboards*, 2023, exhibition view, acb Gallery, Budapest



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