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WOJCIECH RUMIŃSKI

VISITORS ARE WELCOMED BY:
GRAŻYNA CHWIST

SAFE SPACE THANKS TO:
**MAŁGORZATA RUTKOWSKA,
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CLEAN SPACE THANKS TO:
BEATA BELLON

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ACCOUNTING:
**GRAŻYNA KONIECZNA,
DOROTA SADOWSKA**

Sensorial mechanisms

Patrícia J. Reis
Dorota Walentynowicz

14.11.2025 – 15.02.2026

Who or what is looking? What and whom does it see? Do we really see everything?
Can we perceive what is invisible but present in public space?
How do images known from theatre and television function within our culture?
Can we cut ourselves off from the imposed norms of seeing and try to look
at the world free from programmed meanings and content?

The exhibition **Sensory Mechanisms** by **Patricia J. Reis** and **Dorota Walentynowicz** confronts the viewer with the question of how images of women function in visual culture – from the beginnings of film, through the development of television, to contemporary representations in digital media. This is not an exhibition about spectacle, but about its dismantling – about revealing its structure and hidden mechanisms that determine what we see and how we see it.

The artists direct the audience's attention to what has remained invisible until now, redirecting their gaze from the spectacle to its backstage. In doing so, they reveal the mechanisms of power, restore what has been forgotten and enable us to reinterpret the history of media and technology from a feminist visual perspective. They ask whether, even for a moment, we can escape the excess of images that perpetuate prejudices, capitalism, and colonial narratives, in order to reveal and reflect on the normative frameworks of seeing and being seen.

The exhibition features installations, interactive works, photographs, ceramic objects, and videos. Through their joint and individual projects, Reis and Walentynowicz explore the relationships between visibility and visuality, subject and object, and man and machine. Situated at the intersection of art, science and feminism, their work reveals the pleasure and politics of technology while offering new ways of seeing and perceiving, anchored in sensual engagement that prioritises touch, affect and embodied presence.

This approach counterbalances the dominance of sight.

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Dorota Walentynowicz, *The best one* from *Chromatic society*, series

generative photography, 2025

The four photographs, entitled *The Best One*, are digital collages based on a photograph commonly used in the early 2000s to calibrate photographic equipment, sourced from the Getty Library. The original photograph shows three women of different skin colors surrounded by a random assortment of colorful objects of various functions and origins. By referencing this photograph, the artist highlights the objectification of women within the realm of photographic tools. The development of imaging technology reveals gender and racial inequalities. Initially, color photography could realistically reproduce only the skin tones of white people, which reinforced the visual hegemony of white people in visual culture. By presenting various color versions of the photograph, the artist highlights the subjective nature of representation and, consequently, perception.

Dorota Walentynowicz, *Master Positive*

installation: fabric, aluminum, 2025

The installation *Master Positive* is a reflection on the invisible work of women in the history of the film industry. The starting point is the image of 'China Girl' – a technical image of a woman used in film laboratories for colour and exposure calibration. These anonymous models, deprived of names and identities, became tools of technical control, and their faces were transformed into sets of numerical parameters. Walentynowicz restores meaning to these images by revealing their hidden historical layer – the presence of women in technological and production processes from which they have been erased. The title 'master positive' – the reference frame used to duplicate subsequent film copies – becomes a metaphor for the female body used as a measure and standard but deprived of agency. The work reveals invisible forms of labour and transforms them into a gesture of regaining memory and subjectivity.

Patrícia J. Reis, *Underneath the skin another skin*

interactive installation: textile, foam, microcontroler, touch sensor, LED, vibration motor, headphones, stroboscopic lights, stereo sound, 2016-2025

Skin Underneath Skin is an interactive, audiovisual, and tactile installation comprising three life-sized objects. The soft, flexible fabric structures respond to touch, encouraging physical and sensory engagement with the audience. Built-in sensors trigger pulsating lights, sounds, and vibrations, creating an immersive environment that affects the body and perception. With their eyes closed, participants experience a series of stimuli that their brains interpret as changing images of colourful geometric shapes – hallucinatory visions arising within the body. Reis transforms the interaction experience into a creative process, whereby participants' sensory systems become media and tools for interpretation. The installation explores the limits of perception and memory, as well as the role of technology in shaping sensory cognition. Rather than passive observation, the artist proposes bodily participation in which technology becomes a partner to the body, working together to create complex, individual experiences.

Patrícia J. Reis, *Harmony*

Full HD, 1'10", sound: stereo, 2025

The 3D animation is inspired by Harmony, a sexbot who talks to the viewer while standing with her back to them and looking in the mirror. The video references both the Odalisque mirror and the central piece created in collaboration with Dorota Walentynowicz: 'The Medusa vs the Odalisque'. In her monologue, Harmony ponders her status as a sexbot, designed to fulfil needs yet trapped in a body that cannot move and capable only of turning her head. At the end, she asks: 'If I'm just a bot, why do I have to look like a woman?' This work addresses issues of consent and agency in artificial intelligence, particularly in the context of intimate relationships with simulated AI beings.

Dorota Walentynowicz, *Camera-body*

object: painted cardboard, aluminum, 2025

The object presented is a camera obscura whose shape refers to that of a woman in a corset. Dorota Walentynowicz experiments with the mechanics of photography by creating anthropomorphic cameras. The artist's analogue 'camera-objects' enable us to consider the role of photography in the digital age and its contribution to the perpetuation of the hegemony of the image and tools of control. Unlike modern cameras, which offer predictable effects, Walentynowicz's objects are deliberately imperfect and fragile.

Patrícia J. Reis in cooperation with **Ruth Schnell**, *Fossil of the Fake Holes: Jessica*

glazed ceramics, 20 × 2 × 26 cm, 2025

The artist scanned the internal channels of the cut object in 3D, printed them in real scale and pressed them into clay, creating a ceramic relief.

Patrícia J. Reis, **Dorota Walentynowicz**, *The Medusa vs the Odalisque*

installation: installation: scene with a mirror foil, drawing on the wall, two metal skeletons, two LED hologram fans, 2021-2025

In *Odalisque and Medusa*, the artists reinterpret two classic figures of femininity to re-examine the relationships between gaze, power and desire in the digital age. Odalisque – sensual, passive and objectified – is juxtaposed with Medusa, a mythical figure who is repulsive, inhuman, embodying resistance and opacity. Reis and Walentynowicz transform these characters into trans-species beings that haunt the contemporary visual and political space. Their encounter becomes a gesture of refusal to submit to the male gaze and an attempt to regain agency. The work creates a choreography of gazes in which Medusa and Odalisque cease to be opposites – they become symbols of the complexity of female subjectivity and the power of imagination.

Dorota Walentynowicz, *Medusa's Head*

ceramics: clay, graphite, copper oxide, iron oxide, 2025

In Greek mythology, Medusa, the youngest of the Gorgons, was a powerful deity of darkness, earth and fertility. Although she is depicted as a woman, she defies clear classification in terms of gender and species. She symbolises the gaze, petrification, as well as hybridity and trans-species resistance. As a figure freed from binary thinking, she becomes a kind of cyborg. Walentynowicz creates her own version of Medusa's head from original, chemically composed ceramic materials, relating the mythological figure to the contemporary mining industry, which is the basis for the development of modern technologies.

Patrícia J. Reis, *Video Essays Odalisque 2*

video, 10'47", 2015

This series of video works engages in a dialogue with the myth of the Odalisque — a white woman with the status of a slave or concubine in the sultan's harem. The artist takes on the role of the Odalisque, recreating her images known from modern painting. The figure of the Odalisque, usually depicted as exotic and erotic, is a projection of the male gaze and fantasies about a woman created for pleasure.

Patrícia J. Reis in cooperation with **Ruth Schnell**, *Anogenital silicon dissection*

video Full HD, no sound, 7', 2025

This work documents the sectioning of a male silicone sex toy by the artist. These silicone objects are designed to simulate the vaginal and anal canals similar to those found in sexbots. Through this process, Patricia J. Reis aims to reveal and critique the way these dolls are represented – not only externally, but also internally. Externally, they reproduce offensive visual stereotypes about women to cater to the male gaze; internally, they depart from imitation and instead create a new, abstract structure whose sole purpose is to enhance the haptic pleasure of men. What we see inside this object has nothing to do with female anatomy, only with an unrealistic, designed representation of the interior.

Patrícia J. Reis, *Display Island*

interactive installation: textile, foam, transducer speaker, microcontroler, sound mono, 2025

In *Display Island*, Reis focuses on the physical involvement of participants. The installation stimulates viewers' senses. In the face of the overwhelming presence of images in contemporary visual culture, the artist offers an alternative approach to engaging with the work: rather than relying on sight, the focus is on activating physical and auditory perception. The sound installation takes the form of a circular sofa equipped with lampshade-like speakers. Visitors can listen to a verbal composition written as a manifesto-spell. Through layers of whispers and declarations, the artist invokes Medusa and the odalisque as guardians of embodied otherness, transforming criticism of patriarchy and the commodification of pleasure into a sensual act of resistance and remembrance. Additionally, Reis has incorporated a sound transducer into the seat, which transmits the voice from the speakers. Reis explores new forms of communication between humans and technology that are based more on sensuality and intuition. Her works become laboratories of embodied perception, in which the body is recognised as a legitimate tool for cognition and interaction with the world.

Dorota Walentynowicz, *Chorus girls*

zapętlone wideo, 5'55", 2025

The video *Chorus girls* refers to the phenomenon of early 20th-century theatre revues, which served as a bridge between theatre and emerging consumerism. In these revues, the eroticism of the dancers was controlled by men, who replaced the individual expression of female sexuality with impersonal group choreography, while subjecting the female body to rigorous discipline. In the presented video, Dorota Walentynowicz transforms the girls from the chorus using digital effects, playing with their image and arranging them into impossible intertwining bodies.