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Andrea Éva Győri  
*Chest Variations*

January 17 - March 23, 2019

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**HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS**

46 Rue Jean d'Ardennestraat, 1050 Brussels, Belgium  
[www.hl-projects.com](http://www.hl-projects.com)

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[info@hl-projects.com](mailto:info@hl-projects.com) or at +32 485 69 91 46



**Shower tour**, 2012 - ... (On going project)  
Performance, Photos, Videos  
Video Stills, "Dix 7"  
Host: Paul McCarthy, Maritim Hotel, Frankfurt, Germany



**Fantasy after Analyses / VIBRATIONHIGHWAY** (series of 16 drawings)  
**Audience is getting frantic**, 2016  
Watercolor and pencil on paper, 150 x 200 cm

Commissioned by Manifesta 11, The European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Zurich, CH)



Exhibition view of *Traumatized Lemon* at Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art, Middelburg, The Netherlands, 2018. Photo: Leo van Kampen

## ANDREA ÉVA GYŐRI *CHEST VARIATIONS*

“Andrea Éva Győri’s practice is marked by an in-depth examination into the human body and mind. ‘What do we know about our bodies? What do we share?’ In 2012, the artist started a shower tour, asking people for a chance to shower in their place as she didn’t have a shower in her own flat. As a reward, the shower host could document her showering. For Manifesta 11, she teamed up with a sex therapist, with whom she explored the female orgasm and the connection between self satisfaction and the corresponding fantasies behind it. ‘I am especially interested in the female orgasm and female masturbation,’ the artist writes in her recent publication/artist book *Vibration Highway*, ‘because I think this is a means to get deeper into the question of how the mind affects the body and our behaviour.’ After setting up an intimate atmosphere of honesty, trust and fun, Andrea Éva Győri made drawings of masturbating women, who came to her space to share their sexual fantasies and experiences with masturbation.

Touching upon themes that are often left untouched, Győri pleads for a breaking down of taboos and a pushing of the invisible boundaries between public and private. Topics like well-being, health, mental and physical diseases run through her practice. Phobia of viruses and cancer formed the departing point for a series of works in 2013: *Boob Job Nike: A Monument to the Heroes of Warsaw* and *Fear of the Breast 1-18 Analysis*. In the first, Győri gave a statue of Nike in Warsaw a breast enlargement as a symbol of success and advantage, but also implanted a breast illness – implying that people in our societies suffer from both. The second is a series of drawings of breasts contaminated by yellowish and sticky body bulbs. These works were made long before she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017.”

Co-authored by Andrea Éva Győri and Huib Haye van der Werf

*Chest Variations* features work created in 2017/18. With the exception of the paintings and video *Chest Massage*, works were developed as a commission by the Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art (Middelburg, NL) for an exhibition curated by Roos Gortzak. These offer openhearted insight into how Győri handles cancer and considers other possibilities for chests, breasts and ways in which femininity flourishes. “*Chest Variations*” is the artist’s first solo exhibition in Belgium and runs parallel to a larger exhibition hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art (IKOB) in Eupen, curated by Frank-Thorsten Moll.



Exhibition view of *Chest Variations* at Harlan Levey Projects, Brussels, Belgium, 2018. Photo: Ludovic Beillard







*“In the flames, she learns to understand her new gravity. Her new balance. Her new body. The connection to a specific femininity – a natural capacity – is transformed through the loss of her breasts. In turn, within a natural adjustment of balance, her femininity enhanced in strength and intensity. That visible on the outside a bright marker of her burning renewal. That on the inside exhilarated with new found authority. She is standing in her fire.”*

Within the monastery of conceptual and artistic production, she began with particular intent. There, within the intimacy of her own space - unknown to her as being exempt from her past, and impactful to her future – she continued her discovery of femininity and its physical presence. Her own and that of her innumerable sisters. To marvel at it, and its capacity to be pure and powerful, as well as symbolic and (mis)understood. The female anatomy as being more than a subject of identity, allegory, gender, sexuality or maternity, fading grace or beauty. The female as eternal. Splendid in its own right. Self-discovery, pursued. Corporeal intimacy, felt. All of it to be pronounced delicately. Open.

She had always been curious of the body and its interconnectivity. To its own nerves and feelings. Its capacity to generate affect. Instigate difference. How these could be read in its movements. Still and dead, brittle from wounds, or alive with resolve. Her gaze, always instinctively reading these faculties. Understanding their significance. Understanding their relationship to her own body and that of those dear to her. During her schooling, she would dissect the bodies at the anatomical theatre with her particular instruments of perception and visual translation. Searching for their condition. Their difference. Meticulously capturing their specificity. The women she would later invite to collectively discover themselves, together with her, sharing in this fascination. Each carrying with them their own unique physical history and commitment. This drawn out of their experiences, with such sensitivity and care. With understanding. Without indignity.

From this curiosity, she built up a seemingly endless register of interpretations of these capacities. Countless drawings, envisioning femininity without relevance to definitive circumstances such as gravity, aging and benefit. Instead, these imaginations held within them action, introspection, pronouncement and vulnerability.

Then, through her own touch, this insightfulness led to the ultimate revelation. A vital awareness of her own vulnerability. An exposure so precise, and ironically, to that which she esteems so highly. Her body’s full disclosure as a decisive encounter. A confrontation with a hard knot pushing from underneath her soft and fully rounded skin. Pushing up against that which is so precious and definitive. So seemingly indispensable. Yet this confrontation was equally the product of the understanding of her own body. Only now grown from within. Unseen but felt. Spreading throughout. Brooding, with mal intent. Not susceptible to reason or emotions. Hard, in structure and purpose. The only alternative to its unforgiving tenacity being the clinical inevitability of fare well. For her to discover further, without. Within change.

While this change seems to be accompanied with an unforgiving force, it does not temper her curiosity, nor still her capacity to capture it. And to share that. Generously. Openly. Change has been celebrated. It has been ritualized. It is the necessity within her to understand this transformation through her own resolve that instigates such a force. What seems to be a finality of touch and care – at first, apparently definitive and desolate – is in fact the beginning of the new acceptance of herself. A renewed understanding of difference. From this comes strength. The strength to understand herself and her body, again. Constantly.

“The brain learns and changes fastest if one incorporates the whole body: feeling one’s hands, rocking one’s pelvis. Letting our fingers discover ourselves. What we have. What we had. What we are now. What we imagine ourselves and our bodies to be.”

A weight has been lifted in loss. Literally. But then there is soaring flight. After the final push into the mould she once has been. After the intimate and heartfelt sharing of such a cherished goodbye – full of emotions, tenderness and (in)security. She reveals to us that the female body is enduring. It is not bound to anything but the intensity it assumes. It is rainbows, and movements, and versatile. In drawing, in sculpture, in moving image, in paint. It is energy. Colourful and vibrant. Full of form and meaning.

By Huib Haye van der Werf\*

#### EDITOR’S NOTE \*

When I first met Andrea Éva Györi at the Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht in 2017, her curiosity and indulgence is what settled us into good conversation. During studio visits and with other residents. And the subject-matters that came from her have always been inventive, metaphysical, yet and harbouring a firm grasp on the idea of interconnectivity and energy. Her work – I first saw in Zurich at the Manifesta there – fit this inquisitiveness perfectly. Bright strokes made with pencil, pastel and ink meeting the paper. The manifold of paper. All set with playful direction. Her style in each one very loose and swift to point. Altogether almost instructional, but then full of self-indulgence and interpretive allowance. This signature is still in all of her works, only now elaborated into different materialities. Whether sculptural or moving image, each work holds an immediacy, from being deeply personal, to erratically colourful and vibrant. What they all carry is the constant record (and therefore certain understanding) of the body as a continuously changing manifestation. Éva’s awareness of this is what marks her practice. It is seen and felt from an open perspective. Curious. Wanting to understand all of the change.

## TALKING TO BREASTS

Caressing and tickling the breasts, letting the fingers walk on them, gently gripping and pressing the flesh, weighing them in the hands, embracing and kissing them, memorizing the touch of the skin, of the nipples, feeling the tumor that is growing inside. Investigating the pain. In *Talking to Breasts*, we see the artist's torso, slowly tilting from side to side, with streaks of hair falling onto her chest. While the room grows increasingly dark and the shadows heavier, the analyzing, examining touch becomes a more and more intimate one. She bids farewell to her breasts before an approaching double mastectomy. Thanking her breasts for their power, softness, beauty, and sensitivity, while also apologizing for not always appreciating these features, Győri allows the viewers to partake in an intimate examination of what it means to talk to your breasts.

By Marie Sophie Beckmann



*Talking to Breasts*, 2018  
HD Video, 45 mins 46 secs  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Commissioned by Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art (Middelburg, NL)

## CHESTMASSE

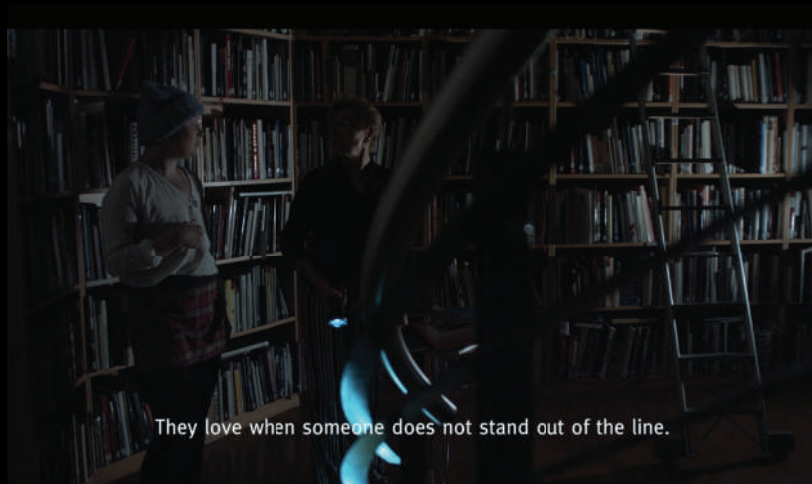


*Chestmassage*, 2019  
HD Video, 9 mins 53 secs  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

In *Chestmassage*, we see a mother and daughter move from an intimate chest massage into a library. An argument arises where the mother proposes the importance of large breasts, their femininity, history, and cultural benefits. Disagreeing with these conventions, the frustrated daughter has an outburst, kicking over books and furniture, and ripping her shirt to shreds, revealing an operated, breastless chest. In a bathroom, the chest massage continues, leaving us to wonder whether the argument really transpired, or if it is merely a vision of the struggles and questions in women's heads.

My artistic practice consists of personal relationships and grows by creating intimate spaces and atmospheres of trust, through a range of mediums. When I create a safe space with someone, I have the possibility to share intimate moments of talking, eating, sleeping, drawing, or recording. These moments can only happen with a basis of unconditional trust, when personal borders are in constant flux and floating around feelings like excitement, fun, enjoyment, and also pain. My work develops on the edge of these fluctuating, sensitive personal boundaries. In my artistic practice, I aim to create a possibility of exchange, a special way of communicating. My intention is to develop a system that provides an opportunity to observe and show personal stories – directly connected to real life – about relationships between children and parents, families from different social backgrounds, formed by and the result of the structure of society.





They love when someone does not stand out of the line.



because I was so much more curvaceous and sexy



Successful men always have flat wives.



And I got the job



With two giant watermelons.



It looks like a whale!



## CHEST VARIATIONS

Silicone sculptures, silicon, resin, plastic, series of 9 (Airplane, Victory Tail, Tongue, Backhand, Rocket, Rainbow), various dimensions, 2018

Commissioned by Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art (Middelburg, NL)

What if, instead of reconstructing a breast and creating a shape as close as possible to an original form, a new breast was given an entirely different shape? What if a chest became a rocket, full of energy? Or a rainbow? An airplane, always in motion? A tongue, confidently shooting out from the chest in laughter? A hand, offering support? With Chest Variations, Andrea Éva Györi imagines possibilities for future chests and breasts. Their properties and features offer stability and balance, emotionally as well as physically, for bodies yet to come.

*Backhand (Chest Variations)*, 2018

Silicon, resin and plastic

42.5 × 38.5 × 24 cm - 16 7/10 × 15 1/5 × 9 2/5 in



*Rainbow (Chest Variations)*, 2018  
Silicon, resin and plastic  
45.5 × 40 × 62 cm - 17 9/10 × 15 7/10 × 24 2/5 in



***Rocket (Chest Variations)***, 2018  
 Silicon, resin and plastic  
 43 × 41 × 52 cm - 16 9/10 × 16 1/10 × 20 1/2 in



***Tongue (Chest Variations)***, 2018  
 Silicon, resin and plastic  
 41 × 42 × 35 cm - 16 1/10 × 16 1/2 × 13 4/5 in





*By the weight of their breasts 4*, 2018  
Watercolor and pencil on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm - 8 3/10 x 11 7/10 in



*By the weight of their breasts 3*, 2018  
Watercolor and pencil on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm - 8 3/10 x 11 7/10 in

## BY THE WEIGHT OF THEIR BREASTS

Watercolour and pencil on paper, series of 5 drawings, 21 x 29.7 cm - 8 3/10 x 11 7/10 in

Being a partner and a mother, a sexual subject and sexual object, looking and feeling “feminine” – being a woman means being a multiple. The female breast can be considered the physical expression of this ambivalence: it feeds, it brings pleasure, but it can host sickness, too. It can be a heavy burden, metaphorically but also quite literally, as shown in the series *By the weight of their breasts*, where women are drawn to the earth by the weight of their breasts, sweating and shaking. Once liberated from them, they first look at each other in surprise, but then proceed to enjoy the new experience of lightness and ease together. Not serving any purpose and no longer needed, the breasts lie on the floor like a pair of sad, fleshy shoes.



## PAINTINGS

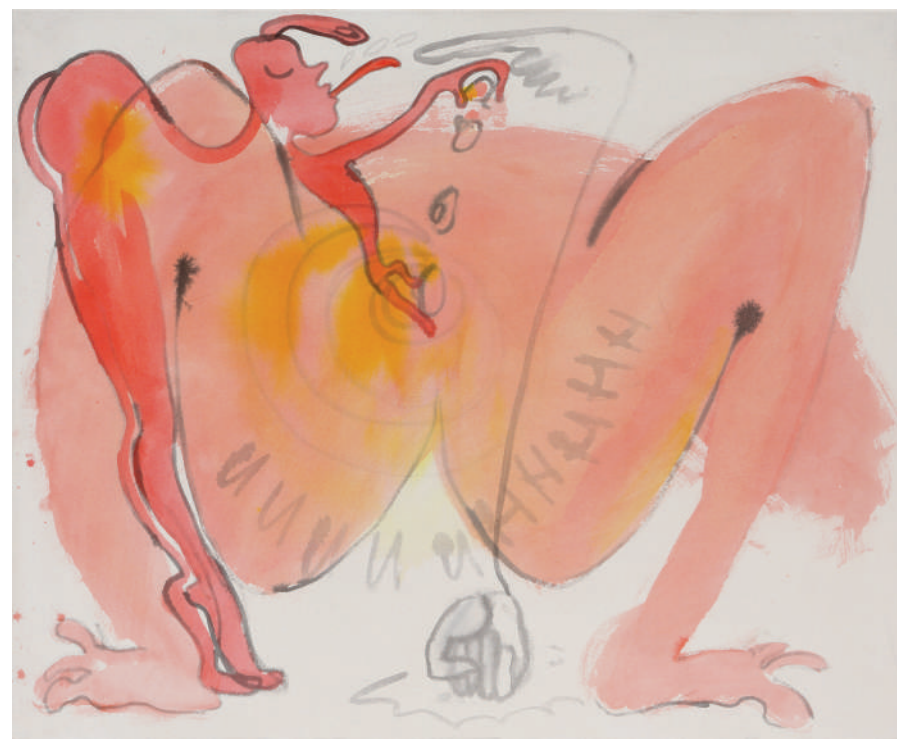
The three paintings in the exhibition, *Loving Domination*, *Salivating Chest Transformation*, and *Explosion Mechanism*, illustrate different perspectives of the same phenomenon: a loose and large, soft body. The hands and tongues of red creatures gently arouse little “stimulus balls.” Two eyes closed, a third eye on top of the head open, discovering and analyzing the pleasure and behavior of the big, loose body. The hand of the big body touches the tongue, tickled beyond her boundaries.

Chest with a tongue. Sleeping with the tongue. Saliva from the tongue. The arm on top of the head, with an eye. Chest with lots of “stimulus balls.” A chest with feet, but no hands. There is a mouth coming, starting to lick, discovering sensitive points of the chests. Feet and toes are tightened. The background is a burning sky. It’s about finding the sensitive parts - the corresponding reaction of stimulations by the tongue.

*Explosion Mechanism*, 2018  
Ink and gouache on canvas  
100 × 150 cm - 39 2/5 × 59 1/10 in



**Salivating Chest Transformation**, 2018  
Ink and gouache on canvas  
90 × 110 cm - 35 2/5 × 43 3/10 in



**Loving Domination**, 2018  
Ink and gouache on canvas  
90 × 110 cm - 35 2/5 × 43 3/10 in

## ABOUT

Andrea Éva Győri (1985, Budapest Hungary) studied in Fine Arts, at Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest and Video/Performance/ Sculpture/Installation at Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart in Class of Christian Jankowski, Mike Bouchet, Felix Ensslin. Studies of Fine Arts at HONGIK University; Asien Oriental painting studies, Seoul, Korea.

Andrea Éva Győri is artist in residence at Jan Van Eyck Multiform Institute for Fine Art and Reflection - Residency Program - Maastricht, The Netherlands (2017-2018); at SeMA NaNJI Residency Program for Art - Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul Korea (2015); in 2019 will be artist in residence with one year fellowship at Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems, Germany.

Győri has presented her work at international institutions, including: Haus der Kunst, Munich; Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art, Middelburg, NL, (solo show); MANIFESTA 11, Löwenbräukunst Zürich; Grimmuseum, Berlin, (solo show); Victoria Art Center, Bukarest, Romania; SeMA NaNJI Exhibition Hall, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul; Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan; /si:n/ Biennial for Videoart and Performance in Palestine, Ramallah; Bundeskunsthalle Bonn; Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden; Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn; Videonale15 Bonn; Kunstverein Familie Montez - Frankfurt / Main; Seoul Art Space-Seogyo, Seoul; 12. Triennale der Kleinplastik, Fellbach; Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart; Goethe Institutions in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Chicago, Südafrika Johannesburg, Hermannstadt, Transylvania. In 2019 Győri is having a solo show at IKOB – Museum of Contemporary Art Eupen, Belgium, and will show her work in several Institutions like Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Bonnefontenmuseum Maastricht, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen.



