

# Stefanie Heinze. Stories of the imaginary

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Stefanie Heinze, *First selects*. Courtesy of the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery

| I travel through a painting process, erasing what I don't want to see in this world.

A playful and introspective body of work, *Stories of the Imaginary* (self-portrait of two lemons) blurs the boundaries between waking and dreaming. Through expressive arrangements, Heinze draws on recent experience of restricted movement and limited social interaction, using the surface of the canvas as a space for the imagination – a substitute for closeness and touch. Proposing an implausible notion (a self-portrait of two individuals), the artist explores dualities, reflections and doubling in relation to constructions of selfhood. The paintings are accompanied by twin titles such as *Parasol* (STICK THER F BOI) and *Junks* (Self-portrait as Bonechewer), which complicate as much as they inform. Heinze begins each work as a drawing, working on each canvas until form and space exist in continual flux – a moment of transition undermining restrictive hierarchies. While these abstracted environments vibrating with vivid colour appear whimsical and enigmatic, her compositions refute normative modes of existence, challenging constructed notions of balance and harmony.

Sometimes my nervous system gets confused like old patterns trying to pull back into the binaries. Distract your senses to get out of triggers, they say. Like cold showers or biting a citrus fruit.

(Sour face)

For Heinze the process of creating promotes healing, allowing her to form a space of respite and escape from the exhaustion of her upbringing and restrictive systems of power. This dissipation of violence is reflected in her embrace of collage, an activity that has intensified with her new work. Through tearing up her drawings and reconstructing them, she disrupts relationships and narratives, uncovering weaknesses in their meaning. Heinze likens this process to a visual and physical way of thinking where connotations evolve in response to new developments. Translated onto large-scale canvases the collaged elements act as a protective shield, sheltering or covering up forms – a metaphor for the recesses of the imagination where vulnerability, fear, misunderstanding and desire are shrouded.

But what about the lemons you ask! I say they are fine, they are plenty, they know where to set their boundaries. It's more their environment that's going nuts.'

**Stefanie Heinze** (b. 1987) lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts, Oslo (2012) and the Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig (2014), also participating in the residency programme at Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Maine (2016). Solo exhibitions include *Frail Juice*, Petzel Gallery, New York (2020); *Ruler*, LC Queisser, Tbilisi (2019); *Odd Glove*, Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2019); *Food for the Young (Oozing Out)*, Mary Boone Gallery (2018); and *Genuflect Softly #1*, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London (2017). Heinze has participated in numerous group exhibitions including *Studio Berlin*, Boros Foundation with Berghain, Berlin (2020); *Quadro*, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2020); *Liquid Bodies*, Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf (2019); *Known Unknowns*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2018), and *Nothing Will Be As Before*, Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin (2018). Collections include MAMCO Genève; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Marguerite Hoffman Collection, Dallas; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; and The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas.

### Pippy Houldsworth Gallery

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is a London based contemporary art gallery showcasing the work of established and emerging artists.

#### Gallery profile

Location

London, United Kingdom



