

Nathalie Djurberg

(Lysekil, Sweden, 1978)

Nathalie Djurberg is one of the most representative voices of the Swedish contemporary scene. In 2004, she undertook a prolific collaboration with the musician and producer Hans Berg, who composes the soundtracks for all her works. Opting for the stop-motion animation technique as her expressive medium of choice, the artist creates highly material-based videos that evoke painting and sculpture, and require the slow time of craft production. The protagonists of these stories are first shaped with Plasticine or clay around a metal skeleton, and are then constantly remodelled and filmed in different positions and expressions in order to give the impression of movement scene after scene. Through a painstaking operation carried out alone in her studio, in an instinctive fashion and without the use of initial scenery, Djurberg little by little creates sets and costumes, making use of fabrics, card and other reused materials. The harmless appearance of this technique, known as *claymation* and often used in animated series for children, invites viewers to lower their guard just before being struck hard.

The videos by the Swedish artist explicitly narrate the dark side of man, his ancestral fears and his inclination towards evil. The most recurrent subjects are abnormal creatures whose bodies feature deformations, mutilations and clear sexual connotations. With a tangibly caricatured approach, these characters interpret carnal pleasures, abuse and humiliation of the body, voyeurism and perverse fantasies, including zoophilia. It's fairly common to feel a sensation of unease and restlessness before the grotesque scenarios modelled by Djurberg, in which animals have human faculties, humans display bestial instincts and even the most innocent creatures turn out to be ruthless torturers. In the short video in the collection, *Tiger Licking Girl's Butt* (2004) a tiger does exactly what the title suggests: it excites a young naked woman in her room, who does not coil away from the act but indeed moans with pleasure, while a captions repeats, "Why do I have this urge to do these things over and over again?" without showing whether the thought is that of the girl or the feline.

Arising from a relationship of trust and reciprocal influence between the creator of the images and the composer of the music, the soundtracks perfectly translate the atmospheres of the videos, adding new layers of meaning through repeated, hypnotic and distorted notes. This interdisciplinary collaboration between Djurberg and Berg, however, is not limited to stop motion. Over the years, the artist has also explored other techniques, from the charcoal drawings of her early days (*My Name is Mud*, 2003) to her immersive sculptural interventions (*The Experiment*, 2009), and from neon light environments (*The Gates of the Festival*, 2014) to her more recent experimentation with virtual reality (*It Will End Soon*, 2018).

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