



EBECHO MUSLIMOVA

MAGENTA PLAINS

Ebecho Muslimova, known for her raucous and sexually uninhibited character “Fatebe” creates paintings and works on paper that beguile the eye as much as they humor the mind. Fatebe’s physical contortions and unpredictable quandaries play themselves out like performances on the canvas: each work depicts a single event that uncannily combines self-consciousness, comedy and vulnerability. Muslimova’s technical prowess as a painter helps to underscore the sheer delight of Fatebe’s misadventures. “As her life continues, Fatebe is faced with newly articulated objects, stretched over landscapes that are populated with new temptations and ghosts. With adoring precision, Muslimova codifies the echoes of domesticity, luxury, nature, education, psychology, fetish, and art itself—images that have the capacity to haunt her. Nothing can deter Fatebe, though. From her gleeful smile, we can assume that her convictions only gain momentum with every new opportunity to test them.” (Quote from Natasha Stagg, *Cura Magazine*).

Muslimova received her BFA at Cooper Union in New York, NY in 2010. Muslimova has presented solo exhibitions at Magenta Plains, New York, NY; Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zürich, CH; White Flag Projects, St. Louis, MO and Room East, New York, NY. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Eva Presenhuber, Zürich, CH; Kunsthalle St. Gallen, CH; Tanya Leighton, Berlin, DE; Delmes & Zander, Cologne, DE; and Ellis King, Dublin, IE. Muslimova created a large scale mural for in The 32nd Biennale of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2017. Her work has been featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Mousse*, *Artnet*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Cura Magazine*, among others. Muslimova is included in Jeffrey Deitch’s *Unrealism* book featuring 27 artists and major essays by Johanna Fateman, Alison Gingeras, and Aria Dean. She will present a solo exhibition at The Drawing Center, New York, NY in 2021. The artist currently lives and works in New York, NY.

94 Allen St.

New York, NY 10002

www.magentaplains.com

Born 1984, Makhachkala, Dagestan, Russia

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New American Paintings

February/March 2020

New
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Paintings

JURIED EXHIBITIONS-IN-PRINT

Ebecho Muslimova

Brooklyn, NY

917.388.2464 (Magenta Plains)

<http://www.magentaplains.com/exhibitions/ebecho-muslimova/> / @Ebecho

b. 1984 Makhachkala, Dagestan, Russia

Education

2010 BFA, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York, NY

Solo Exhibitions

2019 *TRAPSI*, Magenta Plains, New York, NY
 2018 *Ebecho Muslimova: 2017*, Magenta Plains, New York, NY
 2016 White Flag Projects, St. Louis, MO
 2015 Room East, New York, NY

Group Exhibitions

2019 *Life and Limbs*, Swiss Institute, New York, NY
Throwback Jack, Fredericks & Freiser, New York, NY
Wars: 20th and 21st Centuries, David Nolan Gallery, New York, NY
A Detached Hand, Magenta Plains, New York, NY
 2018 *No Fear of Fainting in a Gym*, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland
 2017 *Birth as Criterion*, 32nd Biennale of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Publications

2018 Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe: Volume 2* (Three Star Books)
 2015 Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe: Volume 1* (Onestar Press)

Collections

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Represented by

Magenta Plains, New York, NY
 Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich, Switzerland

Ebecho Muslimova, known for her raucous and sexually uninhibited character Fatebe, creates paintings and works on paper that beguile the eye as much as they humor the mind. Fatebe's physical contortions and unpredictable quandaries play themselves out like performances on the canvas: each work depicts a single event that uncannily combines self-consciousness, comedy, and vulnerability. Muslimova's technical prowess as a painter helps to underscore the sheer delight of Fatebe's misadventures. "As her life continues, Fatebe is faced with newly articulated objects, stretched over landscapes that are populated with new temptations and ghosts. With adoring precision, Muslimova codifies the echoes of domesticity, luxury, nature, education, psychology, fetish, and art itself—images that have the capacity to haunt her. Nothing can deter Fatebe, though. From her gleeful smile, we can assume that her convictions only gain momentum with every new opportunity to test them."

—Natasha Stagg, *CURA*.

Muslimova





Ebecho Muslimova

Fatebe Wet Attic, 2019 | oil and acrylic on canvas, 42 x 54 inches

130

Topical Cream

January 31, 2020

TOPICAL CREAM

01.31.2020

EBECHO MUSLIMOVA: TRAPS!

By Meri Simonyan

Fatebe is Ebecho Muslimova's anxiety transcribed into the "structure of a joke." The cartoon's increasingly physical comedy tableaux are divided into three scenarios: the set-up, the punchline, and the expectation of surprise. Unlike other Fifth Wave icons, Fatebe's body is all she is, everything she has to say comes from a figurative gesture. Ebecho Muslimova's second show with Magenta Plains titled *TRAPS!* is a continuation of Fatebe's outrageous circumstances with a stoic twist.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Net*, 2019. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 66h x 60w in. Photo courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains.

For *TRAPS!* large oil canvases have taken over the gallery space with striking colors that seem to be a new dimension of Fatebe's universe. Muslimova picked up oil as "an excuse to paint and experiment with new textures." The new textures and different spatial environments of the brightly colored oil paintings help Fatebe redefine herself as a flat line on a white surface. She is becoming more real as if she is "redefining her own flatness through color and dimension." The stillness of an oil painting versus a drawing has undoubtedly seeped into Fatebe's psyche, and she has become more stoic even when caught in a trap.



Ebecho Muslimova, *TRAPS!*, 2019. Installation view, New York, NY. Photo courtesy of the artist, Magenta Plains, New York, and Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich.

When asked who Fatebe is to her, Ebecho stated, "She is a surrogate body – a fantasy of me as a person...of my anxieties, depression, pain. I can't fall into a hole and stay there – that's not how we function in reality. We climb as fast as possible. We try to. But she gets to lay down and explore it all." According to the ethics of Fatebe, each failure is an opportunity to start over. As an alter ego of the artist, Fatebe is nothing if not a utopia.

The New York Times

November 20, 2019

The New York Times

ART REVIEWS

New York Galleries: What to See Right Now

“Postwar Women” at the Art Students League; “Japan Is America”; Howardena Pindell’s “Autobiography” series; Man Ray’s paintings; and Ebecho Muslimova’s comic, fearless muse.



Ebecho Muslimova's "Fatebe Deep Frog Organza," from 2019. Ebecho Muslimova and Magenta Plains

Ebecho Muslimova

Through Dec. 18. Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, Manhattan; 917-388-2464, magentaplains.com.

Bawdy, crude, exuberant and empowering, the paintings in [Ebecho Muslimova's "Traps" at Magenta Plains](#) are designed to shock.

They are also individual feats of virtuoso drawing and craft, and they demonstrate how painting can serve as catharsis, personal narrative and raucous joke, all wrapped into one.

narrative and raucous joke, all wrapped into one.

The subject of the Russian-born, New York-based Ms. Muslimova confronts you fully exposed. Facing the gallery entrance is “Fatebe Bent Grill” (all works are from 2019), in which Ms. Muslimova’s alter-ego (that is, “Fatebe”) thrusts her buttocks at the viewer, so the first thing you see is an elegantly drawn pair of labia and an anus drawn with flick-like brush strokes. The rest of the painting, however — like several here — is a Gestalt fantasy of gates and [M.C. Escher](#) frogs that echo a painting across the room, “Fatebe Deep Frog Organza.” Another eye-catcher is “Fatebe Lightning in the Mezzanine” (2019), in which the artist’s doppelgänger lies naked in an armchair, with lightning striking outside, seemingly flowing through her body.

more than mere provocation, there is a luminous body-positive politics to these paintings. Fleshy, female and flagrantly nude, “Fatebe” is simultaneously comic, absurd and fearless. Painted with obvious love and rigor, she becomes a kind of Everywoman superhero.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER

Elephant

November 25, 2019

ELEPHANT

5 QUESTIONS

**The Artist Acting Out Her
Anxieties Through an Alter
Ego Who Refuses to Die**

When Ebecho Muslimova first started drawing the character “Fatebe”, it was as a joke and a distraction from art school critique. Ten years on, Fatebe’s become the star of the show—and of the artist’s life.
Words by Emily Gosling

Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Bent Grille*, 2019

Since 2011, Ebecho Muslimova has led a double life: her own, and that of her sort-of-alter-ego, Fatebe (pronounced “Fat Eebee”), who has manifested through her artwork over the years—initially in the form of thousands of quick notebook drawings, and more recently in a series of paintings, some of which are currently on show at Magenta Plains in New York in a show entitled *Traps!* Fatebe is both glorious and grotesque; hilarious and unsettling as she settles into a series of strange, often logic-defying surreal scenarios.

Born in Russia and raised for the most part in New Jersey, Muslimova studied sculpture at art school, and didn't have a particularly easy time of it: she says that during her senior thesis project, she "kind of had a nervous breakdown" and ended up throwing out the sculptures she'd been working on for the whole of her final year. That was when Fatebe came into her own: the drawings Muslimova had been making as a sort of personal joke, and to show to friends, ended up as her final piece when tacked onto the wall together. She passed the course, but decided that she now "wanted nothing to do with the art world".

For a brief time after graduation, Fatebe went back to being, as Muslimova puts it, "this tragic joke I'm going to do for the rest of my fucking life and never show anyone." However, that "immature tantrum" passed, Fatebe persisted and has been not just the central concern of Muslimova's work, but of her life: artist and subject have a symbiotic relationship that feels incredibly real for a fiction rendered in ink and paint. I spoke to Muslimova about her less-than-great experiences at art school, presenting the female form, the inherent problems with the "fat" prefix and overcoming anxiety.



Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Deep Frog Organza, 2019

Tell me more about your experience at art school: you studied sculpture, so where did Fatebe come in?

I had always drawn since I was very young, then in art school, I didn't draw or paint and I now understand that I did sculpture because I wanted to, on an artistic level, occupy physical space. Fatebe started as a sort of base joke on the back of a notebook, to entertain myself and my friends and offer a sort of relief from art school critiques. I never expected to be so continuously involved with Fatebe: I tried to kill her off a few years ago, just thinking, "Oh God, how many more of these are you gonna do?" But killing her off can't just happen: she just refuses to quit. By now, it's a very important relationship in my life—it's the only thing that I've done for about ten years. It's funny, like the joke became real. I need to keep her, I want to—I'm like her custodian.



Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Landing Failure, 2019

With your second solo show at Magenta Plains you've moved on to working in oil paint. Why did you decide to make that transition from drawing? How far did it feel like a "difficult second album" of sorts?

This is my second painting show, and I'm enjoying it more now. When I started drawing that character ten years ago I set up these tight parameters and rules for her: one frame, no narrative, black and white, no shading... I had a natural sense that I had to tighten the space in order for her personality to take up more space. Somehow formal possibilities of more freely drawing her would have distracted from her entity. Then I forgot that I'm the one who set up those rules to begin with.

For years I was like, "I wonder what it's like to use colour? I wish I could use colour!" I'd sort of made my own prison, then I started to learn painting. I've been painting for two years now and I'm really enjoying how to figure out painting with oils. I'm going to do some wall drawings in future; I'm working on another body of work right now for a show in Zurich in March with Maria Bernheim gallery so in my brain I'm on vacation but actually I'm already behind!



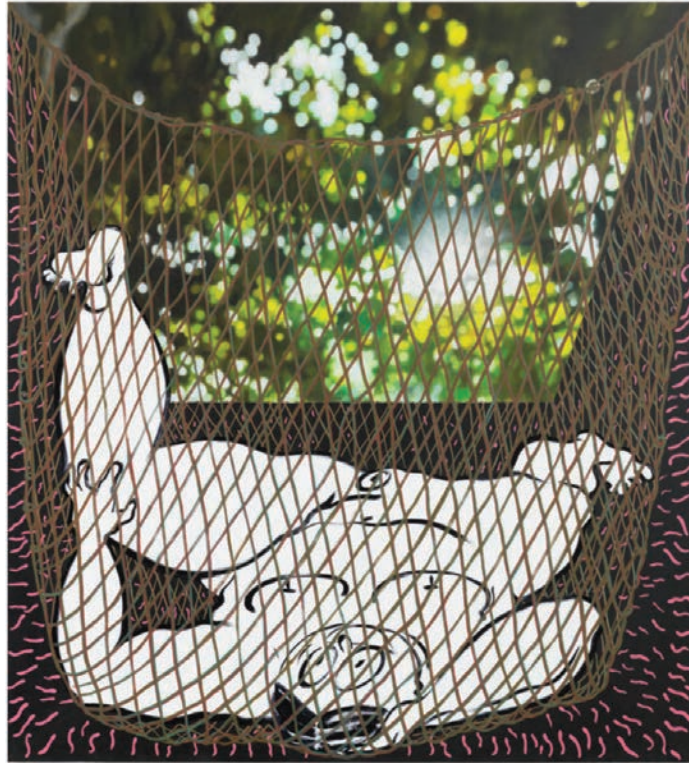
Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Lightning in the Mezzanine, 2019

How do you overcome those anxieties about showing work, or making new work?

Through Fatebe; it's this relationship I have with her where anxieties about work are resolved. I feel like I'm always trying to clarify something through her, and when that doesn't work for some reason it feels like there's a big misunderstanding between what should be on the page and what isn't. That anxiety gets resolved by making a Fatebe that's satisfying to me.

Have you had any backlash about the name Fatebe as an "alter ego" name, seeing as you are a not-fat-girl living in Brooklyn? How far is she really an alter ego of you?

Maybe there were initially conversations about that, but then we're just talking about "who's fat and who's not" and it just becomes so stupid that it falls apart. She is her own thing. I'm actually surprised that it hasn't come up more, but I think that she's really a distinct personality: I'm not making fun of someone has some curves. They're just her attributes—she looks like a lot of people look, and from the point of view of drawing a body, I feel like there's a reason fleshy women have always been painted. It's more fun to render—you can do more, it's more expressive. Fatebe doesn't speak, so her gestures and her body are her language. I think of her as being more like a self-portrait, but not me—like I'm rendering a different self, but she's a friend. She's like a surrogate sister who can do amazing feats that I physically or socially can't.



Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Net, 2019

There's been a lot of discussion around the fact that in your drawings of a woman, there's never a man present, and the idea of challenging how women's bodies are portrayed in art in the absence of the male gaze. Is that a deliberate stance?

I'm drawing her body, because I'm familiar with a woman's body, because I have one. So it's not a purposeful thing: why would I do any other form? There are definitely parts of her that are like me: the creases of her knee, that's my crease, and that detail isn't important to anyone except me; and my eyes get really wide in certain situations, for instance. So there are physical similarities. Also, she's always seemingly on the verge of some anxiety attack, but she's enduring in it. It's not like I'm always on the verge of that, but she's just like an expression of my mental state, so in that way she very much relates to me.

Filthy Dreams

November 26, 2019

filthy
dreamsIn Fatebe, Ebecho Muslimova Has Created
An Abjected Double, A Vessel Of Curiosity
And A Kind Of Superhero

Posted on November 26, 2019 by ADAM LEHRER

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Installation view of Ebecho Muslimova's TRAPSI, Magenta Plains, New York, NY, 2019 (all images courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains)

Fatebe ("FAT-E-be") is in the midst of the Lacanian Mirror Phase. "She's starting to interact with her own image and own sense of self versus the drawing of herself," says her creator, the New York-based artist Ebecho Muslimova. "[The film] *Ex-Machina*, popped in my mind; she's looking at herself in a mirror, self-realizing. I feel like I'm drawn more and more into the relationship between her and her own image."

But the Mirror Phase is supposed to be traumatic, correct? The child looks in the mirror and thinks, "That.... is..... me?" Well if not traumatic exactly, then it's certainly dramatic. On the inside, we are chaotic, polysexual, formless. On the outside, we are a stable entity, more or less. But Fatebe, as rendered by Muslimova, appears totally unfazed by the realization of her own image. A viewer can intuit a wish fulfillment of sorts. Fatebe is Muslimova's curiosity without limits.

"Fatebe" is the absurdist, zaftig imagistic alter-ego of Muslimova, and is now the subject of a stunning series of oil paintings and drawings at Muslimova's current solo show *TRAPSI!* at [Magenta Plains](#). Muslimova has been obsessively drawing her since enduring a trying period towards the end of her education at Cooper Union (around 2011). Frustrated and struggling to meet the demands placed upon her by professors to make the kind of "difficult" conceptual artwork that is catnip to the up-their-own-asses art world elites—Muslimova literally tore up a number of works she made during the period—and enduring other assorted life anxieties, the early illustrations of Fatebe were born of Muslimova's desire to make truly "earnest" work. "There has to be some kind of 'trauma drama' in order to make something earnest," she explains in the back room of Magenta Plains. "It has to come from a place in which you weren't feeling very earnest. You wouldn't draw cartoon pussy if you weren't in some way blocked."



In short, Fatebe was born of her creator's dejection. When she started drawing Fatebe—always naked and exposed, often humiliated—she had given up on the art world. She didn't want to show her work to anyone. She imagined the lifelong obsessive drawing of this abjected alter-ego as a cosmic joke on her life. "[Fatebe] literally came out of a juvenile tantrum that I was having," says Muslimova. "I decided that I was going to draw this one character my whole life, and people would see me hobbling down the street at 80 years old and would say, 'That's Ebe she's drawn the same thing her whole life.' And the joke became real. I can't do anything else. It's funny."

The twisted irony of the joke is that Muslimova has found real success with her countless illustrations and paintings of the character (it appears that the Magenta Plains exhibition currently up has sold out of all the pieces). In a contemporary art culture saturated with boring, serious artists making boring, serious works dealing with relational aesthetics or identity politics and so on, Muslimova's direct, frank, occasionally shocking, and most importantly, hilarious Fatebe works truly stand out in a crowded group show. It would appear that we all crave the kind of clarity of image and directness in communication that Fatebe evokes. In *Fatebe Bear Trap*, for instance, Fatebe is trapped in a bear trap. Make of that what you will.



From a psychoanalytic standpoint, what is most fascinating about Muslimova's work with Fatebe is that the artist has, what she describes as, a very real relationship with her creation. She talks about her like she's a real person who is enduring an in-real-time life on a chronological continuum. In a lecture at [Swiss Institute](#) in which Muslimova described her trajectory in creating Fatebe, she showed a number of slides of early drawings of Fatebe and said that each represent a new experience, a new memory, in the life of this character: "first date," "first fart," "first snake," and so on. All artists, of course, have deep relationships with the works that they create (or they should, assumedly), but I'd wager that very few have relationships as deep as the one between Muslimova and Fatebe.

Kant believed that to humiliate someone was to deny that person's very humanity. And yet, despite the closeness between Muslimova and Fatebe, Fatebe endures all manner of physical and psychological humiliations at the mercy of Muslimova's libidinal imagination. But there is a kind of wish fulfillment going on. Fatebe is, in a sense, a guinea pig for Muslimova's most based curiosities. Fatebe caught in a net, Fatebe shitting pasta, and Fatebe swallowing frogs en masse are just a few of the humiliating scenarios Muslimova has cooked up for her alter-ego in her most recent exhibition. Illustrations of the character allow the artist to expel some very bizarre notions from her consciousness. But simultaneously, Muslimova has empowered her character, forming a unique communicative flow between the artist and her creation, in which the artist can humiliate the character but the character can seemingly endure any humiliation without breaking a sweat.

"She's relishing in [humiliation], because she's my surrogate," says Muslimova. "There's real consequences to falling in holes for me or whoever, so she can explore these surreal degradations in a way that I wouldn't allow myself to. She's vulnerable, and kind of a puppet. But she's just grinning through these trials I'm putting her through, and she can stand up to her creator." Slavoj Zizek said that the true measure of love is the ability to insult one another, and if this is true, it's clear that Muslimova truly adores Fatebe.



Muslimova's Fatebe illustrations have garnered comparisons to other artists that use/have used illustration: Raymond Pettibon, Peter Saul, early 20th Century French satirist Honoré Daumier, and others. Beyond a shared medium, however, it's hard to see how. While those artists respond in real time to current events, Muslimova reaches into the recesses of her mind. There are evocations of the naughty black ink drawings of late 19th century British erotic illustrator Aubrey Beardsley in the sheer distaste and decadence of the images. Suspiciously, critics have failed to detect connections between Muslimova and the Swedish artist Marie-Louise Ekman. Though Ekman is a painter, the cartoonish figures that populate her paintings delight in corporeal and sexual debasements similar to the ones endured by Fatebe. On Ekman's work, [Johan Deurell writes](#): "Her work is consistent, emotional and humorous; and perhaps even a bit repetitive – if the subject matter of personal relations ever can be." Like Ekman's debased figures, Fatebe offers a broadly debauched understanding of what it means to inhabit a body.

But Muslimova has also achieved something that none of these artists have. "Fatebe is Muslimova's invention, which is every cartoonist's dream—to make a memorable character," writes [John Yau for *Hyperallergic*](#). In contrast to the aforementioned artists, Fatebe is the sole vessel for Muslimova to explore the recesses of her subconscious mind. It's hard not to infer psychoanalytic implications from Muslimova's decision to continuously render the same character, her self-described alter-ego, into all manner of surrealist emotional and corporeal disturbances. Fatebe could be viewed, from a certain perspective, as a manifestation of what theorist Julia Kristeva would have called "the double" in her text *Powers of Horror: Essay on Abjection*: a place where boundaries between subject and object begin to breakdown. Kristeva believes that we are continuously drawn to the abject, which could psychologically explain Muslimova's enduring fascination with drawing Fatebe—a character that was literally birthed from an abject period of her life.



But, as Kristeva says, “Abjection is above all ambiguity.” Though a viewer can infer some psychoanalytic level in Muslimova’s paintings and drawings of Fatebe, it is rather impossible to discern what, if anything, these works say about Muslimova’s psychology or emotional state specifically. On the contrary, Fatebe has given Muslimova a creative technique of self-exploration while providing a buffer between her psychology and the audience. She can give her viewers a window into her mind without ever allowing them to see anything specific about her mind. Muslimova’s psychology takes on a formlessness in these works: we understand that it’s present, but can’t see the thoughts, experiences, and traumas that shape and drive it. Muslimova says that the choice to render Fatebe in black line drawings is that the process and shading of painting can infer subtext, which she actively sought to avoid. “What Pettibon does is almost more revealing of who he is because to react to current events is to reveal his own inner feelings about those events,” observes Muslimova. “Drawing is an evidence of thought because it’s so immediate, but like the dark well of my own psyche, no one can see that [in these drawings]. [Fatebe] allows me a sense of privacy somehow.”

TRAPS! is testament to the riveting formal evolution of Fatebe’s illustrative existence. Though the show still features a number of black ink drawings, Muslimova has also rendered Fatebe on large-scale canvases in a number of oil paintings, each sumptuously detailed and emphasizing the character in exciting new ways. But it should also be noted, the paintings only offer vibrant backgrounds, Fatebe remains a monochromatic line illustration. Muslimova credits the choice to render Fatebe to larger canvases to the desire to expand the space around her. “The different textures and illusions of space in the painting reinforce her black and white flatness around her, so she, herself, as a drawing has more intention and dimension in her entity,” she says. But on a more emotional level, she notes, “I also just wanted to try painting because it scares me.”



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In *Fatebe Landing Failure*, for instance, we see her caught in a leaf-less tree, visually distorted to stress the delirious confusion of the situation, while her failed parachute is pictured off below the branches. The larger canvases provide the audience a clearer relationship between Fatebe and the audience. But the overall approach is the same. Fatebe is never the subject of a cartoon or animation, her image is always frozen in time, a picture. Roland Barthes, of course, wrote that photographs were little deaths, still lifes that freeze present moments into eternal pasts, prefiguring the stillness of the corpse. Fascinatingly then, Muslimova is making photographs of Fatebe from this imagined, nonexistent cartoon. This concept elevates the notion that we are being allowed to watch the life of this character through still images, and that every image that Muslimova creates alludes to the inevitability of the character's demise. This technique yields a heightened relationship between the viewer and Fatebe; we empathize with her, we root for her, she's the hero of this implied narrative. "I freeze her in the ideal angle that I want her to be seen in," says Muslimova. "It's important that she's frozen and that we are seeing her from the angle that we are seeing her."

What Muslimova implies here is that it's not just the situations in which Fatebe finds herself that communicate meaning to the viewer, but Fatebe's body gestures as well. And not just the placement of her limbs, and her poses and positionings, but the folds of her belly and the lines of her curves are all exploited as expressive tools. Much like Butoh dancing, the body is used as the primary performative tool in drawings of Fatebe, and Muslimova retains hyper-focus on how the body is depicted in each of the works. "The folds of her elbows, even those can be expressions," she explains. "Whenever things are happening with the body, it's a performance in a way, right?"

While some artists spend careers trying to find their aesthetics and voices, Muslimova has created one singular image that is able to inhabit so many of the avenues artists seek to explore. Fatebe is a rumination on the expressive potential of the human form, an abjected alter-ego that allows Muslimova self-exploration without the risk of over-exposing herself, a source of humour, transgression and absurdity, and—let's face it—kind of a superhero. It is simply impossible to get bored looking at drawings of her. We want her to persevere, we want her to win, and we want Muslimova to keep drawing her. This “psychotic version of herself” that was once a tool for Muslimova to “nourish her creative urges” without exposing herself to the exhausting scrutiny of the art market is now on its way to becoming something that Muslimova never intended to create: a contemporary visual icon. Muslimova's fascinating Fatebe drawings prove that artists should learn to stop worrying and love their mindless doodles.

artnet

October 29, 2019

artnet news

Art World

Editors' Picks: 19 Things Not to Miss in New York's Art World This Week

Here's our weekly rundown of what to catch in the Big Apple.

Sarah Cascone, October 29, 2019

Wednesday, October 30–Wednesday, December 18



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Lightning in the Mezzanine* (2019). Courtesy of Magenta Plains.

7. **Ebecho Muslimova: TRAPS!** at Magenta Plains

For anyone who has not been blessed to stand in front of an Ebecho Muslimova work, make it a priority to see this show. In Muslimova's surreal, multi-color, multi-textural works, a character named Fatebe often performs amazing—and humorous—feats with her body. For the artist's second show at the gallery Magenta Plains, she is showing five new large-scale paintings across two floors, as well as works on paper.

Location: Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street

Price: Free

Time: Opening reception, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.; Wednesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

—Cristina Cruz

Time Out New York

October 31, 2019

TimeOut NEW YORK

The best art shows and exhibits in NYC

Check out our suggestions for the best art exhibitions you don't want to miss, including recently opened shows and more

By Howard Halle | Posted: Thursday October 31 2019



Photograph: Courtesy Magenta Plains

With New York's art scene being so prominent yet ever changing, you'll want to be sure to catch significant exhibitions. *Time Out New York* rounds up the the best art shows and exhibits in NYC, from offerings at the [best photography](#) and [art galleries in NYC](#) to shows at renowned institutions like the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), the [Museum of Modern Art](#) and the [Guggenheim](#).

Time Out New York

October 31, 2019

TimeOut NEW YORK

Ebecho Muslimova, “TRAPS!”

Art, Contemporary art  **Magenta Plains**, Midtown West  Until Wednesday December 18 2019

Photograph: Courtesy Magenta Plains

Time Out says

Since 2011, the work of Ebecho Muslimova has centered on the artist's irrepressible alter ego, Fatebe, whose naked, corpulent figure acrobatically bounces across the artist's drawings and paintings. Rendered in sweeping cartoon outline, Fatebe is usually alone, confronting nonsensical situations with unconquerable good cheer as she overcomes outlandish depredations that often involve defecation, urination and other acts of abjection; indeed, her vagina and sphincter—which are sometimes elastically stretched with unlikely objects such as pianos or ceiling fans—are often prominently depicted. Born in the former Soviet Union, Muslimova adroitly mines a particularly dark vein of absurdism that feels uniquely Russian. That remains true of her current show, in which Fatebe contends with a plague of frogs among other disasters.

POSTED: THURSDAY OCTOBER 31 2019

Artforum

October 30, 2019

ARTFORUM

CLOSING DECEMBER 18, 2019



MAGENTA PLAINS

94 Allen St, magentaplains.com
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MUST SEE

Ebecho Muslimova

TRAPS!

October 30 - December 18, 2019

Reception: Wednesday, October 30th, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

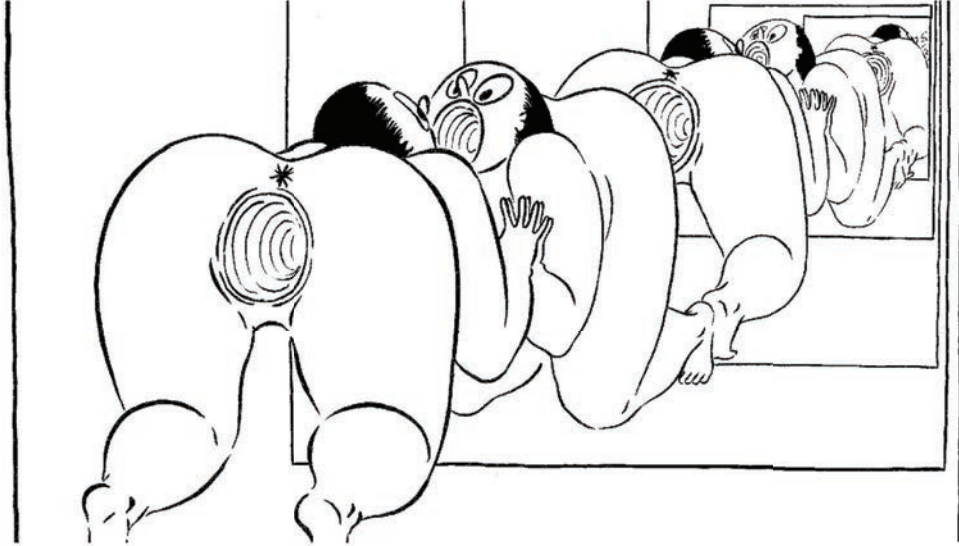
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Cura

Issue 30, 2019

CURA.

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EBECHO MUSLIMOVA
by Natasha Stagg

CURA.30

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In a nightmare common to fits of insecurity, you walk the halls of your office or college campus, naked and unkempt. You recognize the reality of your hunching body and exposed privates, but only after they have been the focus of peer attention for an ambiguous amount of time. You've forgotten a step between one existence—the sleep state, in which the body is not under one's control—and another—the professional performance, in which a person's appearance proves just how much control she has over her body. Posture, makeup, hairstyle, and clothing give the impression of dedication to the cause of studied assimilation, and in this dream, you unwittingly rebel. The concern is not necessarily that it happened but that you did it unintentionally—you somehow let this happen, which means you have lost the essential part of your mind that compartmentalizes these two selves.

THE ARTIST EBECHO MUSLIMOVA INVENTED FATEBE (PRONOUNCED "FAT EEBEE") WHEN SHE HAD A DAY JOB AT A CORPORATE OFFICE.

17



Fatebe was all ego, a version of the artist's self *sans inhibitions*. In an immediate interpretation of the typical insecurity nightmare, she finds herself in public with no beautifying ephemera. But Fatebe feels no shame from this predicament. Instead, she finds pleasure experiencing her precariousness fully, splayed and physically vulnerable while expressing an almost arrogant joy from the amount of space she inhabits. An alter ego, Fatebe is allergic to elitism, and so the luxury of rejecting commercial work while one's potential simmers is something Fatebe, the cartoon character, would scoff at if she could pause long enough to care.

Her own haplessness, an accidental disregard for societal norms, and a balloon-like body excite Fatebe. In pen and ink drawings and large-scale paintings of mixed detail, every misstep she takes proves she can take more, that the outcomes can't hurt her pride if she has decided against any kind of preciousness. In lucid dreams, a fall can turn into flight. Similarly, accidental nudity can become intoxicating.

In much of the world, the amount of space a woman's body takes up has an almost directly inverted relationship to the amount of respect she is rewarded. In Fatebe's world, she appears to believe the opposite is true—and that exposure is everything. Sometimes, she is mural-sized, expanding across an entire building floor, her cartoon holes and nipples punctuating a clumsy pose. She dares you to call her unsexy, a joke, or unworthy of your attention. Even if you did, she wouldn't believe it.

In early drawings, Fatebe illustrated a preference for the comedic over the expected, and the act of intentionally avoiding the goal of integrity. She morphed from a paper cutout perched on pencils to lovingly framed portraits. And then, in the tradition of *ingénues*, Muslimova was discovered as a real artist, right when she least expected to be. The work is probably best viewed at solo shows, in spaces where it doesn't have to compete with art that demonstrates such dissimilar aims. The Fatebe series is brilliant in part because it presents itself as Fatebe herself does—as in, everywhere at once. Straddling all sides of an Approval Matrix, it is outside of one world, looking in, and inside a display case, but peering only at its own reflection.

A conceptual artist might have nightmares in which she accidentally sends her gallery a file of doodles instead of the work she's been perfecting for decades, ruining her career by exposing her somewhat less serious side. Fatebe embraces this fear, even if she is blissfully unaware of an oncoming post-privacy age. Seen in the gallery context, Fatebe is more than a prank or a pastime; she's subversive. Her brazen displays in cartoon settings are mimetic to the brazenness of drawing a caricature and calling it highbrow.

As her life continues, Fatebe is faced with newly articulated objects, stretched over landscapes that are populated with new temptations and ghosts. With adoring precision, Muslimova codifies the echoes of domesticity, luxury, nature, education, psychology, fetish, and art itself—images that have the capacity to haunt her. Nothing can deter Fatebe, though. From her gleeful smile we can assume that her convictions only gain momentum with every new opportunity to test them.

EBECHO MUSLIMOVA (b. 1984, Dagestan, Russia) lives and works in New York. She has presented solo exhibitions at: Magenta Plains, New York; Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich; 247365, New York; White Flag Projects, Saint Louis; ROOM EAST, New York. She has participated in several group exhibitions including at: FRAC Île-de-France, Paris; Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen; Ellis King, Dublin; Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin; Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; Ramiken Crucible, Los Angeles; Tanya Leighton, Berlin.

NATASHA STAGG is the author of a novel, *Surveys*, and a forthcoming collection of stories, both published by Semiotext(e). Her work can also be found in the books, *The Present in Drag* by DIS (Berlin Biennale), *Excellences and Perfections* by Amalia Ulman (Prestel Publishing), *You Had To Be There* by Vanessa Place (Powerhouse Books), and *Intersubjectivity Volume II* by Lou Cantor and Katherine Rochester (Sternberg Press).

All images Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zürich

Art Spiel

December 4, 2019

ART SPIEL

TRAPS! Ebecho Muslimova at Magenta Plains

Exhibition review by Torey Akers



Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Deep Frog Organza, 2019, oil and acrylic on canvas, 60" x 66", courtesy of Magenta Plains

Human civilization has always maintained an uneasy relationship with female monstrosity—just watch the cavalcade of sirens, witches, harpies and hags that stalk the perimeters of every major mythology on earth, luring hapless men to their deaths. This hyper-visible, oft-storied, but deeply erasive marginalization has long plagued the non-normative woman; however, there's a certain freedom in the fringes. Take Baubo, the Orphic goddess of chaos and mirth, whose paunchy, wizened appearance belied a frisky bawdiness that ancient Greeks adored. Ebecho Muslimova's 'Fatebe' character, whom she has been drawing since 2011 and features vivaciously in her latest solo exhibition, *TRAPS!*, at Magenta Plains, New York, builds on Baubo's cultural legacy with appropriately grotesque panache, taking a wide-eyed, manic approach to the tandem joys and pitfalls of embodiment.

The show occupies two floors and consists of large, patterned oil paintings flanked by smaller black-and-white ink pieces, which adopt a somewhat unassuming posture in white frames behind glass. The overarching theme of *TRAPS!* immediately pops upon entry into the gallery; in each image, Fatebe encounters environmental obstacles, like nets or natural disasters, that she navigates with flagrant, surrealist plasticity, often to the detrimental of her body, but never her spirit. Muslimova has approached this suite of work through a planar lens, tilting towards the virtual, and Fatebe's iconic stylization interacts with her surroundings as a digital layer rather than a stand-alone character.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Lightning in the Mezzanine*, 2019, oil and acrylic on canvas, 66" x 60", courtesy of Magenta Plains

In “Fatebe Lightning In the Mezzanine” (2019), the naked figure, crouched in a realistically-rendered chair, leans backwards out an open window, gulping down a hot bolt of lightning into her gaping maw while she leaks rainwater from her genitals. Her skin bears the same design of the wallpaper behind her, a tessellated tangle of tiny Fatebes, cluing the viewer into her semiotic invasion of the space.

When Muslimova introduces color, Fatebe transforms into an iconographic Roger Rabbit, unburdened by the mundane bureaucracy of logic, physics, or pain. Her greyscale infiltration feels filmic at first, invoking a range of references from *The Last Person In Pleasantville* to Betty Boop, but a comparative glance at Muslimova’s drawings place Fatebe’s ancestry staunchly in Al Hirschfeld’s camp. The artist’s hand, both careful and expressive, conjures an old-school slapstick ethos off-positioned in Bakhtinian balance with glamour, a rupturous, Carnivalian burst of irreverence that simultaneously defaces and upholds the status quo. It’s little wonder that Fatebe’s body rarely casts a shadow; she is one. Every inky stammer amplifies her charisma, her irrepressible, guiltless individuality.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Beat Trap*, 2019, Sumi ink on paper, 9" x 12", courtesy of Magenta Plains

Muslimova invented Fatebe as an inside joke, which tracks — her buoyant elasticity seems flush not with self-deprecation, but an earnest, frenetic wish fulfillment. Even when Fatebe loses, she's grinning, emboldened by the kind of agency only hypnagogic chaos affords. It's Fatebe's distance from painting's erotic nude tradition that provides so much space for mischief, transmogrifying her naked form into that of both a lovable trickster goddess and wide-eyed cipher for less ribald interpretations of femininity. Still, some of that madcap heart gets lost in translation with Muslimova's paintings, since their tight, untextured surfaces and self-consciously altermodern portrayals of only grant Fatebe the patina of fluidity, eschewing the kind of expository gesture that sets her drawings apart. This difference is best articulated in the lower level of the gallery, where an engulfing oil and acrylic depiction of Fatebe stuck in a net sits across from a sketch of Fatebe, for lack of better phrasing, queefing spaghetti and meatballs into a chair while seated at a dinner table. The curation is great, as "Fatebe Net"'s tangled position and unbothered pose give the impression that she fell through the top floor, but there's something a little staid and separate about Muslimova's handling; it's an exercise in patterning, an expert deployment of trend. There's simply no match for her tender, small scale virtuosity.



Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Surprise, 2019, Sumi ink on paper, 12" x 9", courtesy of Magenta Plains

Artforum

January 2018

ARTFORUM

Ebecho Muslimova

MAGENTA PLAINS

94 Allen St

January 7–February 11

It's one thing for a woman to be nasty; it's quite another thing for her to be unapologetically fat. A little over a year ago, before the #MeToo movement showed the power of collective voices by calling out sexual abusers, Donald Trump deflected criticism, during the presidential debates, about his misogynist attitudes by throwing Rosie O'Donnell's body up as a rhetorical shield. Add Rosie to a list of full-figured feminists who are brash, excessive, and unafraid of men's opinions of their bodies. Also enter Fatebe, the flexible, bug-eyed, ultravoluptuous avatar of the Russian-born artist Ebecho Muslimova. This exhibition is Muslimova's first to include both drawings and paintings of a ribald character that, through an assortment of poses both banal and coquettish, frequently flashes her vagina or anus.

In the ink-and-gouache drawing *Fatebe 2017 Show* (all works 2017), Muslimova makes artistic doubt a poignant subject: Fatebe tumbles headfirst down a flight of stairs into a basement gallery—namely, the exact space where this show is installed. One breast flops around as another gets dipped into a fecal-looking liquid covering the floor. In *Fatebe Asparagus Pee*, Muslimova depicts Fatebe as a fertility goddess that is as modern as she is abject. She clutches stalks of the vegetable—once grouped into the same family as the lily, a classical fertility symbol—in her arms, while dozens more are shoved down her throat. She also straddles a pyramid of toilet paper.

Several other paintings return to the theme of self-examination. In the colorful *Fatebe Rack*, a take on Narcissus, she seems to be examining her vagina in the surface of a kiddie pool while trapped in a laundry rack. *Fatebe Self Possession* satirizes Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*: Fatebe films into her wide-open vagina, where three miniature Fatebes navigate a winding spiral staircase that exposes some carpeting (get the joke?) right out of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Self Possession*, 2017, acrylic and gouache on canvas, 42 x 60".

— Wendy Vogel

Forbes

January 7, 2018

Forbes

Arts & Entertainment / #GettingBuzz

JAN 7, 2018 @ 08:20 PM 810

The Little Black Book of Billionaire Secrets

A Dick Joke Made By A Woman: On Fatebe, The Character Created By Artist Ebecho Muslimova



Brienne Walsh, CONTRIBUTOR

FULL BIO

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.



Courtesy of Ebecho Muslimova and Magenta Plains, New York

Ebecho Muslimova Fatebe Asparagus Pee, 2017 Acrylic on canvas

[+]

Fatebe, the character who stars in an exhibition of drawings and paintings by Ebecho Muslimova that opens tonight at Magenta Plains, is a slob. She is a

feminist icon. She is ridiculous. She is a dick joke writ with vaginas. She is joyful, she is gluttonous, and she is body proud.



Courtesy of Ebecho Muslimova and Magenta Plains, New York
Ebecho Muslimova Fatebe Rack, 2017 Acrylic on canvas 54h x 42w in

She emerged while Muslimova was an undergraduate at Cooper Union, as “an excuse to entertain my friends. This is what art students do. They get together, they get drunk, and they draw pictures of each other.”

Fatebe takes her name from Muslimova’s abbreviated first name. She is Fat-Ebe. She is uncouth. She is a comment on vanity. She is a low-brow concern. The fact that she is fat is none of your business. “I tell people, she’s already an entity, she just happens to be a bigger weight than other people,” Muslimova said. “It’s not a big deal. It’s just a part of her attribute. It’s ok to big. It’s not a giant statement.”

What started out as a joke became all that Muslimova could create. A sculptress by training, she stopped making objects, and started just drawing Fatebe. Fatebe with a vagina like a hot air balloon; Fatebe

making a circular hole in a wooden floor with her big dumb head.

“Whether I was thinking of it consciously or not, I wanted to own the dick joke,” Muslimova says. “All of these boys around me had the privilege of making boner jokes, and making boner funny art. I didn’t see that being done by women – the back of the bathroom doodle type of freedom.”

Consumed by Fatebe, Muslimova was unsure if she could ever have a career in the art world. She preemptively gave one up. When she graduated, she took a job making prints used on mass-market pajamas – a job she still does today. “I draw flowers by day, and vaginas at night,” she laughed.



Courtesy of Ebecho Muslimova and Magenta Plains, New York
Ebecho Muslimova

[+]

Little did she know, but her career was just starting. Her Fatebe images are skillful, and funny. They emerged at a time when women finally seemed to be breaking through the prison of a certain type of representation. “Vaginas are so serious,” Muslimova told me. “They’re either something so furious, this origin of the world thing, or they’re sexy. But what if it’s just like – the same way men twiddle the thing that protrudes out of them. What if you owned that? Fatebe is not ashamed.”



Courtesy Magenta Plains

Ebecho Muslimova Fatebe Self Possession, 2017 Acrylic and gouache on canvas 60h x 42w in

In the exhibition at Magenta Plains, Muslimova is showing Fatebe paintings for the first time — previously, the character only existed in drawings. The work draws a wealth of connections. They resemble racist cartoons from the 1930s, the drawings of Roger Hargreaves, Japanese woodblock prints, and even the paintings of Tahitian women by Paul Gauguin. They are vulgar, but they are also beautiful, and arresting.

“A big concern of mine is that they are read really fast. You might not get the statement I’m making, but you get a statement really fast.”



Courtesy of Ebecho Muslimova and Magenta Plains, New York

Ebecho Muslimova

Untitled (Jar), 2017 Acrylic and gouache on canvas 12h x 10w in

The titles, Muslimova, are deadpan; but they are also nonsensical, derived from word associations. *Untitled (Jar)*, 2017, which shows Fatebe impaled on a stack of coins, is a “painting I made about getting fucked by money,” Muslimova told me. *Fatebe Asparagus Pee*, 2017 shows Fatebe with her mouth and ears full of asparagus, straddling a pyramid of toilet paper. “I felt very humiliated making this whole show this whole time,” Muslimova told me of the work. “I wanted one painting where I was literally pissing myself. I wanted to do it in a way so that it works as a kind of scratch and sniff in understanding.”

Muslimova is only at the beginning of her career, but she has a natural instinct towards staying true to herself that most people only gain from decades of failing. Fatebe, she believes, is not the kind of character that makes an artist into an art star; but she doesn't care because Fatebe comes out of her cleanly, without struggle. Fatebe is a compulsion, and she is a beacon.

“Whatever I need to be say can be said through her,” Muslimova says. “If I can't figure out a way to say it through Fatebe, then the statement isn't thought out well enough.”



Courtesy of Ebecho Muslimova and Magenta Plains, New York

Ebecho Muslimova Fatebe 2017 Show, 2017 Ink and gouache on paper 10.50h x 17.75w in

It might not be your first choice to go see an exhibition that features a character with sagging breasts that she dips into the brown murk of a flooded basement; but go. I get why Muslimova is fascinated by her character. Once you get a glimpse, you can't tear your eyes away.

Ebecho Muslimova is open at Magenta Plains through February 11, 2018 concurrently with an exhibition of paintings by Zach Bruder.



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Elephant

January 12, 2018

ELEPHANT

12 Jan 2018

New Year, New York Gallery Hop

New year, new you, New York. Get out into the chilly streets, there are a host of brand new shows in town. Words by Noah Dillon



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Rack*, 2017
Magenta Plains

On CNN, the Ball Drop at Times Square—New York City's long-running New Year's Eve ball—looked not too dissimilar to mind-altering performance art, inspiring a fleeting few memes online. Then the new year arrived in the midst of an Arctic blast that brought temperatures in New York down below 10F, the coldest of any such celebration in fifty-five years, and the first shows of the year opened on nights as cold as 3F. It's certainly not the most tempting time of year to brave it out to see some art. Indeed, many top managers, advisers and other art-world luminaries are almost certainly sunning themselves in St. Barths or the like at this very moment. If you can't afford such sunny luxuries, pull yourself together! There are some really great shows opening this month in the chilly city.

Cheim & Read's exhibition of work by Barry McGee opened last Thursday, in spite of blizzard conditions that deposited eight or more inches of snow throughout the day. However, a performance by Alicia Hall Moran and Jason Moran, at **Gavin Brown's Enterprise**, was pushed back until January 15. Alicia Hall Moran, a mezzo-soprano and artist of multiple mediums (including theatre, dance and visual arts), will also be performing at **MASS MoCA** on 27 January. That production employs experimental uses of the music from *Carmen*, telling the story of East Germany's Katarina Witt and American Debi Thomas, figure skaters who both competed and skated with selections from the opera during the 1988 Winter Olympics. The show will be on ice, in case you've been especially enjoying the cold.

Spieltrieb is now showing at **Jack Hanley Gallery**, with works by Polly Apfelbaum, Beverly Fishman, Ryan Mrozowski and Kathleen Ryan. The exhibition's title refers to German philosopher Friedrich Schiller, and his "spieltrieb"—the "play impulse". The sculptures and paintings on view are playful. I always delight in Apfelbaum's bright mutant works and the way in which they confound expectations of divisions between contemporary and modernist imagery, or between two- and three-dimensional art. Downstairs in the same building, at **Nicelle Beauchene Gallery**, is a new show of single-colour canvases by Jim Lee, which opens the same night.

It's amazing that people devoutly drink iced coffee when the outside is frozen. I guess there's no accounting for taste. On your way between shows I would stop in at Irving Farm Coffee on Orchard to get a real coffee, a hot one, and trudge through the snow and slush a few more blocks over to **Klaus Von Nichtssagend**, which currently shows Demetrius Oliver, themed around moving air and featuring paintings, photographs and sculptures rooted in fans.

Afterwards, if you're hungry, go down the street to Canal, hang a right, and up the block is Dimes, a hip, cosy restaurant with a weird menu that's really good. Its eclecticism is pretty sure to fit both budgets and diets of, I'm pretty sure, any variety. I like the black rice and the cauliflower.

If you're in this area, don't miss the exciting Ebecho Muslimova at **Magenta Plains**, with drawings of her exuberant everywoman, Fatebe, all smile, libido and cartoon supermorphia.



Ebecho Muslimova, Fatebe Asparagus Pee, 2017
Magenta Plains

Also recently opened on 28th Street is **Joshua Liner Gallery** tenth-anniversary group show, with works by twenty-one artists from its diverse roster. Anniversary shows of this sort can be really wonderful—for instance Anton Kern's Implosion 20 in 2016 and Jack Hanley's thirtieth, in January of last year. Such shows are often lovingly and generously curated, and the atmosphere is familial.

Artspace

January 12, 2018

Artspace

ARTIST TO WATCH

9 Artists to Watch in January 2018

By Artspace Editors

JAN. 12, 2018

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EBECHO MUSLIMOVA**Magenta Plains, New York****January 7 – February 11**

Photo via Instagram

If there's one thing the editorial team at Artspace can agree on, it's that Ebecho Muslimova blows our minds. The Russian-born, New York-based artist is known for her alter ego "Fatebe," a character who is quite innovative in the ways in which she explores the orifices of her body. In one mostly black-and-white painting (picture the cartoon-like line drawings of [Raymond Pettibon](#), [Koak](#), or old Felix the Cat cartoons), a naked Fatebe looks through a movie camera through her own gaping vagina to peer down a spiral staircase where other Fatebe's stand peering back up at her. In every cartoon, Fatebe is autonomous, Fatebe is active, Fatebe is happy, and in the words of Piper Marshall writing for *Artforum*, "Fatebe is a sinister feminist." A recent graduate of Cooper Union, Muslimova has had solo exhibitions at Room East and White Flag Projects in New York.

artnet

January 16, 2018

artnet news

Market Art World Exhibitions Opinion Partner Content

On View**This Artist's Surreal Paintings Imagine the Adventures of an Outrageous and Unstoppable Alter Ego—See Them Here**

Show of the Day: "2017" at Magenta Plains, New York.

Sarah Cascone, January 16, 2018

Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Asparagus Pee* (2017). Courtesy of Magenta Plains.**EBECHO MUSLIMOVA**

"2017"

Magenta Plains, New York

What the Gallery Says: "Ebecho Muslimova's strikingly graphic paintings and drawings spotlight an alter ego named 'Fatebe,' a grinning, portly figure minimally rendered in sweeping black lines. Wide-eyed and naked, Fatebe finds herself in various impossible situations—a contortionist of voluminous proportions. Whether squatting like a genie inside a jar of coins and gagged by a stack of quarters, or poised as Narcissus over a pool of still water while folded into the angles of a laundry drying rack, Fatebe can do and show things that her author can't."

Why It's Worth a Look: The 33-year-old Russia-born artist has impeccable line work, and is showing paintings, in addition to her usual drawings, for the first time. Each piece reads like an anxiety-ridden nightmare, Muslimova's Fatebe alter ego constantly finding herself in impossible, compromising, or otherwise absurd situations. The work recalls old time-y cartoons, and a Surrealist take on slapstick humor. Through it all, Fatebe remains smiling, and unapologetic emblem of voluptuous womanhood.

What It Looks Like:



Installation view of Ebecho Muslimova's current exhibition at Magenta Plains. Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe 2017 Show (2017)*. Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Untitled (Jar)*, 2017. Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Self Possession* (2017). Courtesy of Magenta Plains.





Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Rack* (2017). Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Arms Display* (2017). Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Wheelbarrow Unicycle* (2017). Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Installation view of Ebecho Muslimova's current exhibition at Magenta Plains.
Courtesy of Magenta Plains.



Installation view of Ebecho Muslimova's current exhibition at Magenta Plains.
Courtesy of Magenta Plains.

"Ebecho Muslimova" is on view through February 11, 2018.

Magenta Plains is located at 94 Allen Street, New York.



Hyperallergic

January 28, 2018

HYPERALLERGIC

ART • WEEKEND

An Artist's Irrepressible Alter Ego

In the world of Ebecho Muslimova's recurring character, Fatebe, there are no men: they are irrelevant.

John Yau 6 days ago



Ebecho Muslimova, "Untitled (Jar)" (2017), acrylic and gouache on canvas, 12 x 10 inches

When Ebecho Muslimova began drawing Fatebe, her alter ego, around 2011, she initially existed only as confidently drawn black ink lines on small sheets of white paper. In a drawing included in her first solo show at Room East (2015), Fatebe is hunkered down, a mad smile on her face, digging a hole and happily flinging mud balls over her shoulder. In another she is scrunched up and flat on her back, crumpled like a collapsed ceramic in exasperated surprise.

Fatebe is a female Buster Keaton enduring humiliation upon humiliation. She has straight black hair and is always seen in her birthday suit, her vagina often exposed. She is zaftig, muscular, and irrepressible — a contortionist performance artist whose only audience is the viewer. The situations she finds herself in are weird, funny and oddly sinister: they have to do with every part of the body and everything the body produces. Shit, piss, and flatulence are all part of the situations that Muslimova depicts with a fluid line.



Ebecho Muslimova, "Fatebe 2017 Show" (2017), ink and gouache on paper, 10.50 x 17.75 inches

Her latest exhibition, *Ebecho Muslimova: 2017*, at Magenta Plains (January 7 – February 11, 2018), includes something new: in addition to the ink drawings, there are four paintings, three of which are large. It is a bold move that may put off some of her fans, but shouldn't.

The small, largely black painting, "Untitled (Jar)" (2017), shows Fatebe stuck inside a white, outlined jar, her flattened white body resembling an overhead view of a frog. With her two big elliptical cartoon eyes upside-down and staring directly at the viewer, perplexed, she is squashed against the glass by the contents of the jar, a trove of gray and copper-colored coins, from quarters to pennies. A column of gray coins descends unimpeded from above the overflowing rim of the jar into Fatebe's open, upturned mouth and out of her stretched-open vagina.



Ebecho Muslimova, "Fatebe Wheelbarrow Unicycle" (2017), ink on paper, 9 x 12 inches

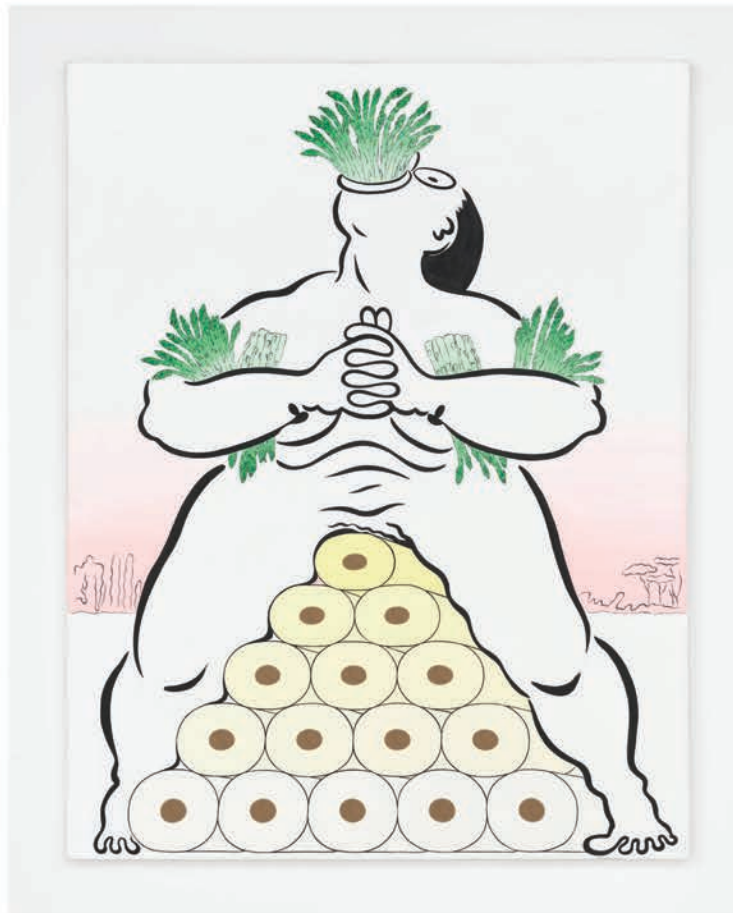
This is what Muslimova does best: she presents a situation where the viewer is hard put to figure out how Fatebe ended up in such circumstances. For all the shame and mortification her alter ego is subjected to, Muslimova never reveals the source (or points a finger), making what could easily be a didactic view into something bizarrely enigmatic.

This is one thing that sets Muslimova apart from other artists working graphically, often in black-and-white. I am thinking of Raymond Pettibon and

Steve Gianakos. The shame and embarrassment that Gianakos's figures suffer through don't invite the viewer's empathy. Pettibon and Gianakos make work that is confrontational and, frankly, male. In Fatebe's world, there are no men: they are irrelevant.

The other difference has to do with the source. Pettibon is often inspired by current events, while Gianakos has long mixed pornography with images of happy children taken from illustrated books. Fatebe is Muslimova's invention, which is every cartoonist's dream — to make a memorable character. She

appears to be asocial, and the only being with whom she interacts is her reflection or manifestations of herself. Carroll Dunham could learn a thing or two about nuance from Muslimova.



Ebecho Muslimova, "Fatebe Asparagus Pee" (2017), acrylic on canvas, 54 x 42 inches

In one of the large acrylic paintings, "Fatebe Asparagus Pee" (2017), Fatebe is squatting with legs apart upon a pyramidal stack of toilet paper. The roll at the top is a sickly yellow, which becomes lighter as it spreads downward through the tiered toilet paper, though the bottom row remains pure white, apparently spared by Fatebe's pee. Meanwhile, she is clasping her hands together and holding a bunch of asparagus stalks in the crook of each elbow. Another two bunches are tucked between her forearms and her breasts. Finally, Fatebe flings back her head, her open mouth crammed with more than a dozen asparagus stalks, as if her mouth were a vase. Muslimova's riff on the trope of woman as vessel is a perverse celebration of olfactory delight.

In "Fatebe Self Possession" (2017), Fatebe's limbs are bent around the edges of the canvas like a rectangular donut, so that she is looking down into her wide-open vagina, which contains an overhead view of a stairwell receding down to a patterned carpet in red, orange, and black. Fatebe is filming the receding set of stairs with an old-fashioned movie camera. Three Fatebes peer up from different places on the staircase. The carpet at the bottom, framed by the staircase, is the only color in this otherwise black-and-white work. Fatebe's self-obsession — of which there is a trace in all of the work — is given the full treatment in this painting. And yet, contrary to what you might expect, the narcissism comes across as peculiar, even benign: she is making a film of her other. While Fatebe might not embrace multitudes, she does contain mirror-



Ebecho Muslimova, "Fatebe Rack" (2017), acrylic on canvas, 54 x 42 inches

In "Fatebe Rack" (2017), Muslimova uses color graphically, filling the ground with a solid green. Fatebe is folded over so that her hands are touching her feet, entwined in the bars of an unfoldable laundry rack, which, for some inexplicable reason, is rising out a child's black rubber wading pool (or oversized washtub). She is staring into the water, which goes from pale pink to pale blue, reflecting the unseen sky above. This mirroring is echoed by Fatebe's dark blue reflection in the water, which is staring up at the figure perched above, and gives the painting a spatial dimension that Muslimova has not previously brought into her work.

As one might expect, Muslimova paints tightly and graphically, and her paintings share something with those of John Wesley. Fatebe seems to exist in what Jacques Lacan called the "mirror stage," which is supposed to happen during early childhood, when the infant becomes fascinated with mirrors. While this theory has long since been discredited, what Muslimova does is create a character that is innocent, curious, and fascinated by her reflection. No matter what fate befalls her, she remains remarkably imperturbable. This is what I think Muslimova's fans adore about Fatebe — no matter what happens to her, Fatebe accommodates herself to the situation and she never gets knocked down.

Ebecho Muslimova: 2017 continues at Magenta Plains (94 Allen Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan) through February 11.

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February 2018

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EDITORS' PICKS



“Ebecho Muslimova”

at Magenta Plains

through February 11

In this show of new drawings and paintings, Russian-born artist Ebecho Muslimova's recurring character Fatebe finds herself, once again, awkwardly positioned. But whether she's straddling a pile of toilet paper rolls, entangled in a folding drying rack, or speeding down a hill in a wheelbarrow, she is never less than superbly self-assured.

Image: Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Rack*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, 54 x 42 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

The New York Times

July 23, 2015

The New York Times

ART & DESIGN | ART REVIEW

Ebecho Muslimova Draws a Clumsy, Manic Alter Ego

By KEN JOHNSON JULY 23, 2015

Many people have distorted impressions of their own bodies and consequent feelings of inferiority. It's hard to maintain a positive self-image when unrealistic ideals are thrust before our eyes everywhere we look.

So when an artist like the gifted drawer Ebecho Muslimova creates funny, wordless cartoons of a lovably goofy, corpulent alter ego called Fatebe, we know what she's wrestling with. In [this show's](#) eight pieces, selected from more than 100 Fatebe drawings she has made, Ms. Muslimova envisions this avatar as a kind of indomitable, clumsily manic performance artist.

Sinuously outlined with fine brushes in black ink on snowy white pages, Fatebe appears naked, with unkempt hair and expressions of popeyed surprise, in all sorts of awkward and confounding situations. In "Fatebe Floor Piece," she has somehow managed to cut a splintery circle in a gallery's wooden floor, using her head like a jigsaw.

"Fatebe Dirt Hole" could be a homage to Mike Kelley: It shows Fatebe furiously digging mud, flinging clods into the air. The soil can be read as feces, which suggests a vision of the artist delving into her own primal unconscious. In an untitled piece, she re-enacts the myth of Narcissus: At the edge of a black river, she is bent over and using her hands to scoop out a masklike reflection of her own face.

Ms. Muslimova was born in Russia in 1984, graduated from Cooper Union and lives in New York. This is her first solo exhibition. It's a modest but auspicious debut.

Room East

41 Orchard Street, near Hester Street, Lower East Side

Through Aug. 15

A version of this review appears in print on July 24, 2015, on Page C20 of the New York edition with the headline: Ebecho Muslimova. Order Reprints | Today's Paper | Subscribe

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SEPTEMBRE

Entre sexe, provocation et humour, l'artiste Ebecho Muslimova fait mouche

ART

Cette représentante de la jeune scène new-yorkaise connaît un vif succès avec ses dessins en noir et blanc de Fatebe, une sorte de double d'elle-même en version extra large et totalement décomplexée, qu'elle met en scène dans les positions les plus suggestives et provocatrices.

Par **Nicolas Trembley**Partager cet article [f](#) [t](#) [✉](#)

Peinture murale d'Ebecho Muslimova pour la 32e Biennale des arts graphiques de Ljubljana.

Ebecho Muslimova, jeune artiste née en 1984, originaire du Daghestan russe et formée à la Cooper Union de New York, a créé un alter ego que tout le monde adorerait posséder. Ce double avec lequel elle joue, c'est Fatebe (pour "Fat" et "Ebe", diminutif du prénom de l'artiste) une grosse femme nue qui apparaît dans des dessins faits à l'encre noir sur des pages blanches, comme dans une sorte de journal. Totalement désinhibée, Fatebe n'hésite pas à présenter son sexe et ses fesses aux spectateurs. On la retrouve dans les positions les plus acrobatiques, cheveux au vent, accrochée à une barre de gymnastique, compressée dans une boîte en carton, etc. Ces dessins ont été rassemblés dans *Fatebe Volume 1*, un livre publié chez Onestar Press à Paris. Fatebe est une caricature hilarante et décomplexée d'Ebecho Muslimova. L'artiste s'en sert pour créer des situations qu'elle même ne saurait se permettre de vivre. Nous avons rencontré Ebecho et Fatebe lors de leur exposition à la Galerie Maria Bernheim, à Zurich. L'artiste, elle, n'est pas du tout grosse... comme on peut le vérifier sur son compte Instagram (@ebecho).

Numéro : Quel est votre parcours ?

Ebecho Muslimova : Je suis née en Russie, au Daghestan, et j'ai grandi à New York, où j'ai fait mes études à la Cooper Union, avec une spécialisation en sculpture et dessin.

L'environnement dans lequel vous avez grandi vous a-t-il influencée ?

Il m'a influencée dans une large mesure, c'est certain. C'est notre lot à tous, il me semble. J'ai commencé à dessiner très jeune. À la maison, j'ai toujours été soutenue et applaudie. Dans ma famille, tout le monde est doué pour ces choses-là. Lorsque nous avons émigré aux États-Unis, pour faire face à la barrière de la langue et aux problèmes un peu dingues que je rencontrais, je me suis appuyée sur cette capacité à dessiner et je l'ai développée – cela m'a aidée à surmonter la confusion que je ressentais.

Comment avez-vous su que vous vouliez devenir artiste ? Et que signifie le fait d'être artiste pour vous aujourd'hui ?

J'étais une enfant hyperactive. Je courais partout, sans pouvoir m'arrêter – à tel point que mes parents ne parvenaient même pas à m'asseoir assez longtemps sur la cuvette des toilettes pour permettre le passage des selles. Je restais parfois constipée pendant plusieurs semaines – jusqu'à ce qu'ils finissent par comprendre que le seul moyen de me faire tenir en place sur le trône, c'était de me donner du papier et un crayon pour dessiner. Je crois qu'en tant qu'artiste, c'est encore ce que j'essaie de faire aujourd'hui : arriver à chier correctement.

Quelles sont vos références en matière d'art, ou dans d'autres domaines ?

J'aime énormément le travail de Mike Kelley, ou celui de R.D. Laing, les dessins de Raymond Pettibon... Et tout dernièrement, je suis tombée amoureuse des écrits de Dennis Cooper.

“J'ai commencé à dessiner le personnage de Fatebe à la fin de mon premier cycle universitaire, un peu comme une caricature de moi-même en version complètement désinhibée.”

On vous connaît pour un ensemble d'œuvres qui représentent Fatebe, une figure féminine nue et potelée, dans différentes situations. Pourriez-vous nous dire comment le personnage est apparu dans votre travail, et ce qu'il représente ?

Je n'aime pas qu'on la qualifie de "potelée" – c'est un terme à réserver aux enfants. Fatebe est grosse, et ce n'est pas un problème ! J'ai commencé à la dessiner à la fin de mon premier cycle universitaire, un peu comme une caricature de moi-même, en version complètement désinhibée. Une sorte de double "*Übermensch*" [surhumain], à un moment où je me sentais totalement découragée, fragilisée par la pression que je ressentais par rapport à ce que je m'imaginais devoir produire. Ce personnage est d'abord né pour moi et mes amis. Je voulais vraiment créer quelque chose de libre, et de drôle dans sa sincérité. C'était pour nous faire marrer, mes amis et moi, mais pas forcément en rivalisant d'astuce ou d'esprit. Je voulais simplement que nous soyons séduits par cette entité nommée Fatebe, comme on peut tomber amoureux de quelqu'un d'exceptionnel.

Considérez-vous Fatebe comme un alter ego ? S'inspire-t-elle de votre vie ou est-elle une pure fiction ? Vous inspire-t-elle en retour ?

J'aime bien envisager ces dessins comme des autoportraits, mais les autoportraits de quelqu'un d'autre. À l'origine, le terme "alter ego" indiquait que ce second moi était un "*ami véritable et fidèle*", et c'est comme ça

que je vois Fatebe. Elle vient de l'intérieur de moi-même, mais, surtout, je crois que je réussis bien à l'en faire

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Cherchez-vous à aborder des problématiques politiques ou féministes ?

Peut-être y a-t-il en effet une dimension politique à regarder longuement et intensément l'image que vous renvoie le miroir et, à partir de là, votre travail. Il me semble en tout cas que cet effort qui consiste à faire le point sur soi avec honnêteté s'étend à d'autres concepts. Pour moi, les thématiques féministes seraient difficiles à formuler avec précision, mais je me dis : "*Comment le simple fait de produire cette œuvre pourrait-il ne pas constituer en soi une position féministe ?*"



Fatebe Pianist (2017), d'Ebecho Muslimova, dessin à l'encre sur papier, 47,31 x 39,69 cm.

Quel est votre rythme de travail ?

Ma pratique et ma production fluctuent en fonction du niveau qu'atteint mon besoin de communiquer. Je me sens plus en forme quand je produis avec régularité, même si, parfois, j'ai besoin de laisser Fatebe infuser en moi quelque temps. Je ne saurais vous dire combien de dessins je fais par mois. Elle me vient par jaillissements sporadiques.

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Composez-vous par séries, ou les dessins sont-ils indépendants les uns des autres ?

Les deux, d'une certaine manière. Chaque dessin exprime une idée autonome, que je n'éprouve pas le besoin de réitérer ou d'élargir une fois qu'elle a été transcrite sur la page à travers le personnage. Mais j'imagine qu'on pourrait considérer l'ensemble du projet comme une série.

Pourquoi avoir choisi de dessiner en noir sur du papier blanc ? Il semble d'ailleurs que cela soit en train d'évoluer, puisque vous avez récemment utilisé de la couleur, et de plus grands formats, comme cette peinture murale présentée à la 32e Biennale des arts graphiques de Ljubljana, en Slovénie... Comment voyez vous l'évolution de votre travail ?

Dessiner est pour moi la façon la plus naturelle de penser, et ce sont les limites imposées par le noir et blanc qui reflètent le mieux ma manière de raisonner. J'ai probablement développé une forme de pensée binaire, résultat de traumatismes passés, ce qui m'a aussi conduite à rechercher le moyen le plus direct pour expliquer cet autre moi. La décision d'utiliser du papier blanc de petit format revêtait un caractère strictement pratique : puisque ces dessins étaient d'abord conçus comme une gratification personnelle et immédiate, il me semblait idiot de dépenser de l'argent en fournitures artistiques de grandes dimensions. Même si je reste concernée par les défis d'un art minimal en noir et blanc, je commence à trouver intéressant de laisser la couleur faire quelques apparitions. Par son échelle, la représentation murale de Ljubljana constituait sans aucun doute un grand changement ludique, mais, là encore, la décision était pragmatique. Le sujet, ce grand dispositif inspiré des machines de Rube Goldberg, ici employé à des fins onanistes, nécessitait beaucoup de place. Il était impossible de m'en tenir à mon format habituel.

Vos œuvres ont-elles vocation à favoriser une prise de conscience du public ?

L'importance jubilatoire des détails dans l'espace qui sépare les choses.

Quel sera votre prochain projet ?

Je suis très impatiente de monter l'exposition prévue cet hiver à la galerie Magenta Plains, à New York.

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EXHIBITIONS

"The Crack-Up" and Ebecho Muslimova at Room East, New York

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Ebecho Muslimova



My Darling,
Though you are far away from me, nothing will change.
I will love you truly and you will always be a special part of Fatebe.
I long to feel the comfort and softness of your loving arms. I want to hug you and kiss Fatebe and hold you tight but I must wait..
Until we meet again, I long for Fatebe.
Yours,

at Room East, New York





Ebecho Muslimova installation views at Room East, New York, 2015
Courtesy: Room East, New York.

Artforum

July 2015

ARTFORUM

EBECHO MUSLIMOVA

by Piper Marshall

ROOM EAST

41 Orchard Street

June 28, 2015 – August 15, 2015

A particular smell clings to New York City's Chinatown in the summer. The aroma makes its way to Orchard Street. It inflects the eight drawings hanging at Room East. These direct cartoons depict FATEBE. FATEBE is artist Ebecho Muslimova's alter ego. We may not know Muslimova, but FATEBE is a black line on white ground. And Fatebe is doing things (think Garbage Pail Kids). FATEBE is playing with herself; she is playing with her fat body. She stares at her face in a stream of shit. She twists her form into a mess on the potter's wheel. She folds her flab over a wire. She flatulates out into the open. She digs up dirt with her hands. She drapes her flesh over handrails. She offers us a view of her symmetrical vagina.

But seriously, what compels us to gape at FATEBE? Why does our gaze linger so readily, so openly? These drawings thrust in front of us what we will to push aside. FATEBE taps into the drive that lures us downtown. She makes us inhale the foul stench of the moistest nights. She throws at us that which we are required to withstand: our bodies, our selves. FATEBE is a sinister feminist. She wildly grins.



Ebecho Muslimova, *Fatebe Air Pump*, 2015,
ink on paper 12 x 9".

The Creators Project

July 2015

Creators

VICE

Meet Fatebe, Our Body-Positive Art Obsession | Monday Insta Illustrator



Being naked is awesome, and rarely do we see that simple idea expressed as joyfully and with such variety as in [Ebecho Muslimova's Fatebe](#) drawings, which were plastered all over One Star Press' booth at the [New York Art Book Fair](#) this weekend. The Russian artist and Cooper Union alum's energetic alter ego lets it all hang out while executing acrobatics that range from the impossible to the downright impressive. Sometimes her drawings tackle the everyday struggles of womanhood, such as uncomfortable shoes and objectification, but Muslimova really shines when abandoning reality altogether and illustrating kooky contortions of female anatomy. I'll never be able to unsee the image of Fatebe straddling a ceiling fan, or her internal plumbing reimagined as chemical dumping pipes.

Several other works in both spaces speak to more bodily and comic interpretations of the theme. At P!, Kate Levant's *Untitled [enhancement]* (2016) highlights the ups and downs of sexual prowess via a shiny laminated enhancement pill wrapper whose only visible text reads, "Performance." At ROOM EAST, Levant's *Untitled* (2014) inkjet print depicts a snake swallowing an entire egg from a nest. The snake's jaws must have detached in order to swallow, and one can imagine the lump visibly travelling through its slippery body. Also lumpy are the bodies in Ebecho Muslimova's ink drawings on paper. *Fatebe Brick Holder* (2015) shows a woman who supports a tower of bricks by sticking them between her legs, supported by rolls of fat.

In *Fatebe Slides* (2016), the same woman (presumably) stuffs her plump body into two human-sized sandals, one for her legs and one for her arms. Her hands and feet are each stuffed into four additional, appropriately sized slides, but her gleeful smile suggests she is enjoying this corporeal challenge. Barbara Bloom captured other amusing contortions with *Berlin Street Corner* (1989) back at P!: one woman of average height bends slightly to address a much smaller, older, and hunched over woman with a poof of grey hair. Their differences in the print are exaggerated by the split colors of the custom matte.

Muslimova's brick stacks relate directly to Miles Huston's *A Fallow Field* (2016), a tower of eleven produce boxes reaching from floor to ceiling, touching both so that the stack could be imagined to extend above and below the ceiling and floor at ROOM EAST. This gesture has, of course, been tried before (see, for example, Constantina Zavitsanos's tower of debt documents), but the Eight Mile Creek Farm boxes here sport a sticker of a friendly farmer carrying items herself; the visual doubling and familiarity with such boxes hint nicely at tactility.

Also bodily and quite interesting is Steven Holl's *Tesseract of Time* (2016), an archival print on cotton rag that reads as a drawing. The top half is a sort of Trisha Brown dance diagram and the bottom could have been the basis for Susan Marshall's *Chromatic* piece at The Kitchen. This piece could also very likely have been the starting point for the show, as it literally depicts how bodies could interact with architecture: under, in, on, and over. The tesseracts drawn on the bottom half are slightly larger than a human. They are meant to start out on the ground as black and white sculptures but later be raised to "catch [the] gold of [the] rising sun" (linking the piece to Leonard's photograph). Holl also intended to have dancers wear asymmetrical costumes in primary colors with green while they responded to "music patterns in a chromatic field." This is where Marshall could have come in—her piece wove Josef Albers' color theory into a frenzied lecture-come-dance-come-musical performance.

Relating more directly to architecture are Marc Handelman's oil paintings on inkjet prints, another series that is split between the two spaces. *Untitled* (2016) at P! seems most successful of the three on display, but all works attempt to make architecture disappear into the sky by extending the pattern of the sky with paint over the top of the building. In the piece at P!, the building's outline is still somewhat visible as one can see where the paint ends, and this level of difference is most interesting. The prints seem to be of architectural building mockups rather than photographs of existing buildings, and could conceivably be a sort of sociopolitical protest of gentrification in line with Gemmill's stated interests.

Several of the remaining works in the show respond to over-under with formal concerns. In Karel Martens' *Untitled* (circa 2008) letterpress on paper, a pink doughnut form interacts with a yellow rectangle. The rectangle's outer edge is tangential to the doughnut's outer edge while the rectangle's inner edge is tangential to the doughnut hole. The effect is that the rectangle seems to emerge out of, or unravel from, the loop. Because the shapes' shared area is of a mixed color, it is unclear which shape is on top.

Last to be unraveled are the two rolls of toilet paper facing the street at ROOM EAST. This installation by Aki Sasamoto presents the most quotidian explanation of the show with an accordingly accurate title (*Under/Over*, 2015). Though both toilet paper holders are hung on the same wall at the same height, one roll faces the wall while the other hangs toward the viewer. Most would agree that one roll should be switched. More difficult to decide: which one, and why does this flip feel most pressing of all?

O—U at P! and Room East ran from 15 JULY–20 AUGUST, New York.

Mira Dayal

Credits:

1. Installation views of O / U at P! and Room East. Courtesy of Sebastian Bach.

Posted on 21 September 2016