

Huw Davies Gallery
4th March - 3rd April 2021

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Preying for Modesty (Meatheads)

Katrina Stamatopoulos

Experimenting with the valorising power of portraiture, Stamatopoulos urges us in *Preying for Modesty (Meatheads)* to re-cast our relationship with the animals we eat. The London-based artist invites us to meet – as persons – the livestock we kill, consume and, arguably, rely on.

Print works reincarnate as human sitters packaged cuts of meat sourced from big chain supermarkets as well as local grocers and farmers' markets. Video pieces depict farmers carefully butchering animals they raised, contesting practices of anonymous industrial slaughter. The creatures of the exhibition may be mute, but they ask us uncomfortable questions.



Katrina Stamatopoulos, *1.80 (From Meatheads)*, 2020, black and white hand print on emulsion coated paper, 52 x 70cm

Lest in Pieces

When Katrina Stamatopoulos makes a photograph we are always presented with new intending bodies, surreal agents playing up to reality, arranging themselves in her lens with candid and disorderly spirit from scraps of unnoticed inanities.

Like a carnivorous kind of Pop, Katrina's new work *Meatheads* brings us various perspectives of meat, uniting consumerism with farming and subsistence living while abstaining in both cases from moral prescriptions. It is a spiritual and social meeting being arranged here. *Meatheads* defies the luxury of ignorance and re-mystifies our meals and our life by focusing respectfully on the afterlife of our livestock and ourselves. For we owe our brains to animal proteins, our bodies to theirs

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in dust-to-dust transaction. We know these things, only never for long. Scarcely are we urged to meet and identify with our fellow beings, and in our special acquaintance with these subjects here, we too must transcend the gloom of habit and become imaginative agents of will.

In *Meatheads* Katrina reincarnates commodities of various supermarket flesh using the civilising techniques of portraiture, but never so much that we are freed of the ghost of our industrialisation of meat protein. Photographed like human sitters, we see the cutlets, sirloins, mince and medallions of human invention, the supermarket codes that de-worlded this flesh from its living whole, and the tags which award the perished subjects a monetary value in the afterlife. But the papers are attentively hand-washed with emulsion and processed with experimental care, adding life to the prints by welcoming organic variables and idiosyncrasies. The personified subjects are hung low in the composition, generously providing their very own space for... what, their thought bubbles, their words?

Viewers are invited to converse with and to reimagine origins, afterlife and soul, as we fill these lightly textured voids with speech, faces, names and fur. What sounds did they make? What would they say, what would they ask of us now that we face them?

The quiet and careful slaughter presented in the video series *Preying for Modesty* presses alternatively on the viewer. Here are rural situations in which families butcher their animals out of need, on the grounds on which they are nurtured and petted. We are still spared their faces, however. Their eyes and souls are again left in the care of our imagination. Collaborating with rural lives to depict Australian farms in their own image, the videos nonetheless present us with richly draping organs and peeling hides, the interior universe prolapsed and expanded in spectacular colours and forms. Also handling sound production, Katrina upholds the giggles of toddlers, the yapping of dogs and the humane discursions of families on supermarkets and techniques, re-appropriating slaughter from industrial aberration. Twitches of life return only at the end of the videos as we see the flesh almost rewinding to complete animal incorporation. The fur climbs back, the hooves fret and the blood flows nearly up to life as we discover the videos are presented in reverse order. But the artist does not provide resolutions – they are politely requested of us. The film cuts, ceases, and blackens to credits, leaving thoroughly and hopefully in the realm of viewers the responsibility to link ourselves into our everyday meat ecologies, to complete the circle with spiritual respect while we are still able.

In witness to these works we might look down and ponder our own hands and feet. We might ponder that, but for colour, texture, and heartbeats per minute, our material is the same, our blood and skin and sinew the same, and our captivity in fields between birth, barcode and beloved care ... the same.

Benjamin Carey

Benjamin Carey is a Melbourne based artist and writer originally from Maitland, NSW. A graduate of University of Newcastle and the UNSW College of Fine Art, he has written for Tharunka and Association for Performance Art Berlin. He self-published his first novel at age 25.

Katrina Stamatopoulos | About

Katrina is a Greek - Australian artist based in London. Her interests are located amongst meanings of agency and subject, what we consider real, scientific and surreal, and how we consistently misperceive through photography. She is interested in connections between the ways we digest food and images, and how they are intertwined as daily process. Katrina interprets this link as a method of grasping inside and out, with oneself and others, and with the one we consume and are consumed with being human.

Focusing on a variety of image-making perspectives, Katrina works amongst pinhole/film photography, chemigrams, darkroom experimnts, found footage, scanography, bookmaking sound and video.

Graduating in 2012 at the College of Fine Arts, University of NSW, she has since then, been a previous resident of the BigCi (Bilpin Ground for Creative Initiatives) Wollemi National Park, Australia, and Haihatus Art Center, Finland and is on a current mentorship with Four Corners, as a part of London Creative Network's mentorship program.

Katrina has participated in various group exhibitions such as *Altered States* St John's Crypt, London, *Surge*, The Courtauld East Wing Biennial at Somerset House, *Manpower '16*, Lisbon, *Real/ Unreal* held at Bath Photography Festival, and *Noisefloor*, an Experimental Music and Moving Image Festival in Staffordshire.

Katrina is a 2020 MFA graduate from Goldsmiths College, London.

List of Works

6.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £1.29, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
7.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £0.80, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
8.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £1.09, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
9.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £1.80, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
10.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £4.59, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
11.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £2.62, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
12.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £3.70, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
13.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £1.13, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70 x 90cm	\$2500
14.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, <i>Preying for Modesty</i> , 2020, three-part video, 22:55 min	NFS
15.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £3.90, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70cm x 90cm	\$2500
16.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £3.00, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70cm x 90cm	\$2500
17.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £1.59, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70cm x 90cm	\$2500
18.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £3.15, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70cm x 90cm	\$2500
19.	Katrina Stamatopoulos, £3.90, hand-painted emulsion on Somerset paper, 70cm x 90cm	\$2500

Public Program: Artist In Conversation: Better out Than In

Thursday the 11th March, 7pm, Online Facebook Stream

Helen Pynor, Kerrie Cooke, and Laura Dalrymple will be joining artist Katrina Stamatopoulos for an online conversation broadcast live from Facebook to accompany Stamatopoulos' exhibition, *Preying for Modesty (Meatheads)* at PhotoAccess.

Helen, Kerrie, Laura and Katrina will meander around visualisations of our food and our relation to the animals we eat. Illusion and disillusion concerning consumer anxiety, and the transactions that take place with our environment, will be opened up in this space.

Just like a burp, connected ideas need a release.

More Online

Visit www.gallery.photoaccess.org.au to learn more about *Preying for Modesty (Meatheads)*.