

JANI RUSCICA

Notknot

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galerie anhava

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*Cut doors and windows to make room.
Where the room isn't, there's room for you.*

*So the profit in what is
is in the use of what isn't.*

– Lao Tzu, interpreted by Ursula Le Guin

Notknot, Jani Ruscica's fourth solo show at Galerie Anhava, strives to break away from rigid frameworks of binary thinking to discover new junctures, connections and polyphonic forms of being. In the murals stretching along the gallery walls, works printed on rice paper, a video installation and confetti scattered across the floor, refusal appears as potential: one "no" opens the door to many "yeses". *Notknot* is a living situation, a node where old knots and conventions of naming come undone and dissolve only to form new, intricate bonds.

Ruscica works with the mediums of sculpture, moving and printed image, and performance. At the core of their practice lies a need to destabilise our relationship with signs, materials, language and the body, rendering it volatile and precarious. In their new works, Ruscica seeks to disrupt continuums even further, stretching the appropriated signs and symbols of the murals until they become virtually unrecognisable, and rejecting both linguistic expression and normative conceptions of the body.

The seemingly coherent form found in Ruscica's earlier woodcuts has, in the new works, been decomposed and reassembled into a fragmentary weave: in addition to the engraved wood cut plates, other imprints on the paper include clothes, plants, electrical wires, straps and strings, all rendered in vibrant colours. Alongside trouser legs, sleeves and skirts, the printed shapes include the artist's own body parts and face, their soft, hazy forms alternating with the precise imprints of seams, pleats and cuffs. The wood reliefs and the hybrid compositions made from joined shapes of paper echo the surrealist technique of the *exquisite corpse*, in which a figure is assembled through a playful, collective sequence of separate, individual drawings.

The sculptural video installation *Polynotknot (and they bloom)* keeps changing its form, with its clips continuously and randomly shuffled into a new order. Within the imaginative fleshy shapes and masses one can discern a varying number of mouths, eyes and drawings on the skin. The organically folding and piling figures remain uncoded, their improvisational, non-linguistic polyphony humming, buzzing and vibrating around the gallery space.

In the site-specific murals symbols lean against doorways, animal figures undulate along walls, enveloping the gallery and its audience, turning around bends and curving along the corners of the angular space. Cut from the gallery's paper waste, spiral confetti is fluidly pushed around by the visitors feet into new formations and spaces. The flexible, unfixed form of the works is purposefully ephemeral: the works continuously regroup and reshape, even as one views them. Their porosity and impermanence refuses coherence, certainty or even legibility. This rebellious indifference to constraints liberates form to seek, through refusal, new, unpredictable and surprising positions.

Jani Ruscica (b. 1978, Finland/Italy) studied sculpture at the Chelsea College of Art & Design in London and media art at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. Ruscica's most recent solo exhibitions were at Kunsthalle Helsinki (2022) and 1646 art space in The Hague (2021). Their works have also appeared in numerous group exhibitions, including Kiran Nadar Museum, New Delhi (2023); 6th Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2023); HAM, Helsinki (2023); MMOMA, Moscow (2021); AGWA, Perth (2020); and the 1st Riga Biennial (2018). Ruscica has work in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, the Saastamoinen Foundation and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. In 2018, the Finnish Art Society awarded the William Thuring Prize to Ruscica.

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