

Margaret of Ypres (1216-1237), Mary of Oignies (1177-1213) and Lutgard of Aywières (1182-1246). Trapp studied the life histories of these late medieval ascetic women, and these readings informed her works that are on display in the exhibition. The painting entitled *Organs of Medieval Female Mystics* is a tribute to these female mystics, while the other work of the series is a tribute to the mystic and philosopher Simone Weil – all of them were individuals whose bodies were subversively reclassified as sites of performative acts in relation to the social norms of their time. The writings of Chris Kraus and Simone Weil, as well as the works of major authors of the Hungarian reform movement provided a further context for the realization of the works.

The drawings on view were created during the times of Dominika Trapp's teenage eating disorder, over the course of around five years while Trapp's eating regime was a very strict plant-based diet. This rather rigidly principled life-style programme, which escalated to the point of becoming compulsive and toxic, required a focused attention to the body; exercising control over the body primarily through the regulation of nutrition. The will to transform the body, to cleanse it and to nourish it in a way that was thought to be as 'healthy' as possible also shaped the body *from within*, through the 'maintenance' of the intestines, turning the focus entirely towards the control of bodily processes.

The drawings on view in the exhibition are imprints of this peculiar awareness of the body, as well as of the bodily visions experienced during the scrupulous dietary programme. Although this conscious eating regime may draw parallels with mainstream eating trends associated with 'healthy eating' (cleansing diets, detox diets),

the main motivation behind Trapp's ascetic practice, achieved through nonindulgence, the slow deconstruction of the body and its reassemblage, was the idea of total purification and the ability to reach a state of a fully focused attention.

In Dominika Trapp's practice, the space of agency, especially the often restricted space of action assigned to women, is of particular importance: in this context, the power and competence over the shaping of the body can be interpreted as a means of distancing herself from classical gender roles. In parallel with this, in the case of the medieval saints, non-eating and the gradual depletion as a performative act of self-consumption can be read as a mode of protest and an attempt of breaking out of assigned roles and narrow spaces for maneuver, turning the stomach and the intestines into a site of resistance.

Dominika Trapp graduated from the painting department of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2012. In her works, she often addresses topics such as eating disorders, women's fate in traditional Hungarian peasant culture, the relationship between tradition and contemporary culture, or painting as a possible methodology for artistic research. In her curatorial and collaborative projects, she generates situations of dialogue between socially or culturally distant groups. For the past two years, she has participated in the residency programs of Art in General in New York, the Erste Stiftung in Vienna, and FUTURA in Prague. In 2020, her solo exhibition entitled *'Don't lay him on me...'* was presented at Trafó Gallery in Budapest and she also had a solo show at Karlin Studios in Prague in the same year. She is currently a student of the DLA program in multimedia art at the Doctoral School of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design.

Sources:

Tóth Kinga: Szójabörteregetés és testvíziók – interjú Trapp Dominikával
Secondary Archive | Ágnes Eperjesi, OMARA Mara Oláh, Dominika Trapp
Kunsthall Trondheim | Revisiting Genesis
T.J. Demos: The Death of Death: Oreet Ashery's Revisiting Genesis, in: Afterall, 3 October 2016

Accompanying events, as part of *'Support structures'*, an event series around practices of caring and coping (curators: Flóra Gadó and Judit Szalipszki)

- **Guided tour** (in Hungarian)
23/09/2022 | Trafó Gallery
- **Mary Maggic: Open Source Estrogen** | Lecture performance on hormonal histories and fictions
01/10/2022 | Trafó Club
- **Hangover Reading Club #12** | Reading group session led by **Rowena Harris** (UK)
08/10/2022 | 11:30 | Online
- **Guided tour** (in Hungarian)
14/10/2022 | Trafó Gallery
- **Barbora Kleinhamplová** (CZ) | Lecture performance
14/10/2022 | Trafó Club
- **Feminist Health Care Research Group: Being in Crisis Together Workshop**
led by artist and curator **Inga Zimprich** (DE)
15/10/2022 | Trafó Gallery

Supported by: National Cultural Fund of Hungary, Káli Kövek, DIOTEX-Bio Kft., Austrian Cultural Forum

trafogaléria 1094 Budapest, Liliom utca 41.
+36 1 456 2040 // gallery@trafo.hu // www.trafo.hu
Nyitva: keddtől vasárnapig 16-19h, előadási napokon 16-22h
Open: Tuesday to Sunday 4-7pm, performance days 4-10pm



nca



How do you throw a brick through the window of a bank if you can't get out of bed?

Opening: **19:00 (FRI) 02/09/2022**
On view: **03/09 – 16/10/2022**

Exhibiting artists: **Oreet Ashery, Ágnes Eperjesi, Feminist Health Care Research Group (Julia Bonn / Inga Zimprich), Adelita Husni-Bey, Mary Maggic, OMARA Mara Oláh, Dominika Trapp**

Curator: **Judit Szalipszki**

The exhibition offers insights into the states, gestures and institutions of illness, health, vulnerability, healing and care. The works, however, do not regard the spheres of sickness and health as two separate spaces, but as parts of a spectrum on which we constantly move back and forth throughout our lives depending on our physical and mental wellbeing, our mobility and mixed ability to perform.

While for people living with chronic illnesses distinctive life rhythms are a fundamental experience, for a person who thinks of themselves as a 'healthy being', the condition of sickness dislocates them from their usual linear temporal regime and their routines. Meanwhile, the slowness of malaise and the shrinking of the space for action contradict the ideas of efficiency and incessant activity. At the same time, market economy does not leave the fragile spaces of illness and the end of life untouched: we never cease to exist as consumers in the marketplaces offering real and virtual solutions, services and remedies.

Although the individual's physical condition is one of our most intimate experiences, it is just seemingly a personal issue, concern and responsibility; the exhibition understands both illness and the process of recovery as something embedded in the social framework. Beyond the social fabric and the economic system as an essential context, we need to regard the health and toxicity of different human and non-human beings, bodies and environments as something that cannot be separated.

Finding a language and an adequate expression for the physical and mental state of feeling unwell is not self-evident – some of the works thus also highlight the process of questioning and rendering individual experiences, pains and feelings invisible. One way of opposing this may be to articulate lived experiences; to create new narratives of one's own and to establish and operate initiatives with accessible knowledges and languages along flatter hierarchies that exist in parallel with the formal health care establishment. Within these themes, the exhibition also explores how, as an artist, one can reconcile creative activity with the condition of illness and how sickness influences and shapes artistic practice as well as everyday life.

The works on view also reflect on the inequalities of health care systems, and highlight strategies and practices that provide an opportunity for reclaiming our agency and for the enhancement of self-determination over our bodies as cultural constructs that are constantly subject to formation and change in a metaphorical as well as physical sense.

As the title of the exhibition, borrowed from Johanna Hedva's 2016 essay *Sick Woman Theory* suggests, the

works highlight forms of coping that can be applied in the physically and mentally vulnerable state of illness. Hedva imagines a world in which interdependence is the norm, in which health is a collective matter, in which vulnerability is celebrated. When will the time for a revolution of bed-ridden and exhausted bodies come; a world in which 'the sick rule the world' (Dodie Bellamy), instead of constantly adapting our possibilities to the expectations and contours of the world around us?

Oreet Ashery

Oreet Ashery's *Revisiting Genesis* takes the form of a web-series in twelve episodes addressing chronic physical and mental health conditions, death, the conflict between constant visibility and withdrawal, the politics of the digital afterlife as well as end-of-life and posthumous service technologies. The series, developed in consultation with medical death experts, involves contributors working as nurses in real life and people who have life limiting conditions while it responds to questions of identity and self-representation, the commercialisation of death, and forms of care and attention that are verging on almost being toxic. *Revisiting Genesis* blurs the boundary between the fictional and the real: while some characters are recalling their own life-and-death situations, others follow a script, however all the digital services featured in this film are actual, existing commercial services.

As well as broaching subjects such as friendship, care and professional life, Ashery's film offers insight into ways in which modern digital technology is a gateway to an after-life, challenging our fundamental understanding of death: through our data we can live forever and interpersonal relationships can be further extended after our death as some kind of a techno-dystopian imaginary. Though it is clear that not everyone has access to this 'digital immortality', it is as immortality would be an exclusive benefit for the privileged only. And who benefits from this relative immortality? In what can also be seen as a chain of crises, and in a world that – as many believe – is on the verge of collapse, the question may be raised as to whether it is worth living forever on this earth, and what future awaits the immortals?

Oreet Ashery is a UK based interdisciplinary visual artist born in Israel. Ashery works on public, community, educational and participatory projects that are both politically and socially engaged, and is particularly interested in gender, race and religion, ethnicity and identity. Ashery was appointed Stanley Picker Fellow in 2014 and won the Jarman Award presented by Film London and Whitechapel Gallery in 2017 with the series *Revisiting Genesis*. In 2020 she was awarded the Turner Bursary replacing the Turner Prize 2020 due to pandemic. She is an Associate Pro-

fessor of art at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford and a Fellow at the Exeter College, University of Oxford since 2017.

OMARA Mara Oláh

“If I didn’t experience a lot of humiliation, shaming, disdain, hatred, there would not be this otherness in my paintings that makes me unique. With all my pictures, I want to express emotions, tell stories, fight for freedom against injustice.”

Throughout Omara’s life, her health and her artistic practice had been closely entangled. She suffered from several serious illnesses, and at the age of 38, she had to have her left eye removed due to cancer. The start of her career as an artist can also be described as a period of crisis: in 1988, after the sudden death of her mother, she suffered from an intense migraine and began painting to ease her pain. Painting thus became a kind of therapeutic methodology for her. As she had doubts about continuing her practice due to the lack of formal art education, in 1991 she took her painting depicting her eye operation, entitled *My surgery*, which is also on view in the exhibition, to the Hungarian National Gallery for jurying, and, encouraged by the experts, she continued her practice.

From 1992 on, she superscribed her paintings to ensure that the scenes she depicted are not misunderstood or misinterpreted. The verbal narration of the images alongside the visual form has allowed her to exercise her authority over the interpretation of the picture, which is particularly important since some of her works, such as the painting entitled *‘Well! This was the very last time I visited a doctor!’* are inspired by lived experiences. The work can also be interpreted as an act of amplifying an experience of epistemic injustice, a narrative of exclusionary treatment in an exposed and vulnerable state, in which a doctor questioned the patient’s experience, feelings and symptoms, “judging” her, labeling her as a “notorious”, problematic patient. Depending on one’s background, especially in a moment filled with pain and difficult emotions, one may not have the linguistic tools for self-assertion that would allow for a more balanced hierarchy of communication in a medicalised situation – which is problematic because the acknowledgement and consideration of feelings and pain are essential for an accurate diagnosis. The direct, raw language on the painting counterpoints the often difficult-to-access medical jargon and can thus be read as a linguistic subversion of the doctor-patient hierarchy.

Omara’s paintings depict her own life story and are imprints of her minority status, of the hardships she has experienced as a poor, as a solo mother and as a Roma woman. In her narrative paintings, she expresses the offences she faced and the discrimination she suffered from.

In addition to her paintings expressing social criticism, her performances, public exposures, outspoken statements and provocative appearances are an integral part of her oeuvre, and can be interpreted as a peculiar feminist attitude, as well as a struggle for Roma emancipation. Omara has participated in several exhibitions in Hungary and abroad. In 2004, she took part in the group exhibition *Silent Holocaust* at Kunsthalle Budapest. In 2007 she exhibited in the first Roma pavilion of the Venice Biennale, and in 2009, her works were featured in an international context at the representative exhibition *Gender check. Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* in MUMOK, Vienna. Her solo shows include *The Jewelry of*

One-Eyed Omara is Only Visible With a Magnifying Glass (2011) at Liget Gallery and *Think What You Want* realized with her active participation in aqb Project Space (2017), Budapest. Invited by OFF-Biennale Budapest, her works are currently on show at the Fridericianum in Kassel as part of the project *One Day We Shall Celebrate Again*, presented as part of documenta fifteen. Omara lived in Szarvasgede until her death in 2020.

Ágnes Eperjesi

The colourful photograms of Ágnes Eperjesi’s series entitled *Rolled-up gesture*, are created by wrapping a bouquet of flowers in photographic paper, evoke both gifts given to the convalescent and bouquets given to thank nurses for their work. The series is inspired by a work or a series that can be described as an ‘object of gratitude’, a gesture of appreciating the caregivers for their care and attention at the end of a nursing process. Eperjesi’s works therefore highlight the importance of everyday, ephemeral, human gestures of care. The two photograms were previously exhibited at the Hospice House in Budapest; meaning that the images were firstly on view in an environment dedicated to palliative care before a classical contemporary art exhibition context.

The photograms are animated by the motifs of the hands, shedding light on the tender and personal aspect of care. The analogue photogram is a photograph created without a camera or negative, a ‘light-borne drawing’. In the case of the photogram, the light-sensitive material and the subject of the image are in direct contact with each other, the distance between them being reduced to almost zero, so the works also refer to the close contacts and peculiar acts of caring and tending through touch – caressing, dressing, embracing – in a mediated form, and evoke X-rays as one of the most fundamental medical imaging technology.

Throughout her career characterized by a consistently built visual language and intellectual vocabulary, Eperjesi has been examining media theoretical questions and the social consequences of the use of media. In her practice, the artist examines with sensitivity and almost scientific methodology the specificities of the photographic medium, its unexplored possibilities and meanings. From time to time, Ágnes Eperjesi keeps returning to a series she started in 2011, in which she folds the photosensitive material to itself so the sensation of colour and the spatial nature of the phenomena are simultaneously captured.

Eperjesi’s works are part of the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA; Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts, Japan; Staatliche Galerie, Moritzburg, Halle; the Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest History Museum, Ludwig Museum, Budapest; the Foundation for Modern Art in Dunaújváros, the Szent István Király Museum in Székesfehérvár, the Hungarian Museum of Photography in Kecskemét and Miskolc Gallery.

Eperjesi had solo shows at acb Gallery, Fészek Művészklub Gallery, Inda Gallery, Robert Capa Contemporary Photography Center, Mai Manó House of Photography, Nessim Gallery, Vintage Gallery, kArton Gallery and Studio Gallery, Fuga, Architecture Center in Budapest, Szent István Király Museum in Székesfehérvár among other institutions. Between 2010 and 2021 she was teaching at the Intermedia Department of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. She obtained her Doctoral degree in 2010 and habilitated in 2021. She has been teaching as a lecturer at the Budapest Metropolitan University since its establishment and since 2021, as an associate professor.

Adelita Husni-Bey

Over six weeks in the spring of 2021, Adelita Husni Bey led a group of Danish and US unionized nurses through an online film workshop centered around their experience of worsening labor conditions. The collaborative film entitled *On Necessary Work* discusses challenges faced by the healthcare system during the pandemic, with a focus on their working conditions and the impact of the pandemic on their personal lives, mental health and work expectations. The film, which was shot predominantly via Zoom, documents the nurses’ conversations, which are complemented by footage of their environment and work gear. The film provides an everyday and personal reading and critique of nursing work during a pandemic period that further deepened structural problems. Through the healthcare workers’ perspectives, the video sheds light on the way contemporary society cares for those who do care work, the role nurses play in curing, and how collaboration, exchange and organizational cooperation can provide a possible way out of the care crisis. Although the film is essentially an insight into the experiences and unionization efforts of Danish and American nurses, it can in many ways be set in parallel with the crisis and circumstances of the healthcare system in Hungary.

Adelita Husni Bey is an artist and pedagogue with a multi-layered practice including the creation and production of films, installation, publications, workshops and archives. She is interested in using non-competitive pedagogical models through the framework of contemporary art as well as in working in collaboration with people and experts active in different fields. Working with activists, architects, jurists, schoolchildren, spoken word poets, actors, urbanists, physical therapists, athletes, teachers and students across different backgrounds her work focused on harnessing the potential of collaborative practices.

Her work has been exhibited at the Kadist Foundation in Paris, Gasworks in London, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Gwangju Biennale, the MAXXI Museum in Rome, the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, Kunsthall Bergen and the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, among others. In 2017, she exhibited in the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and is currently working on the film *These Conditions*, which will be on view at the Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea in Turin in 2022.

Mary Maggic

The exhibition explores the phenomena of health, well-being and sickness not only in a social context, but also in an ecological one: the pollution and toxicity of human, animal and other bodies, waters and landscapes are interlinked on a molecular level. This phenomenon is highlighted in Mary Maggic’s video entitled *Molecular Queering Agency*. Various pharmaceuticals, hormonal pills, substances and devices, as well as chemicals used in large-scale agriculture seep through our bodies, interacting with our hormone systems, participating in the ongoing formulation of our bodies. Non-binary artist Mary Maggic explores the interrelationship between hormones, bodies, gender and the environment; their practice challenges the neoliberal promises of science and technology. They point to the closed and opaque processes of the pharmaceutical industry through tactics of biohacking, amateur science and speculative design.

Mary Maggic is a Chinese-American artist currently based in Vienna, Austria. Maggic is a current member of the online network Hackteria: Open Source Biological Art,

the Asian artist collective Mai Ling Vienna, as well as a contributor to the radical syllabus project Pirate Care and to the online Cyberfeminism Index. They are currently exploring the environmental and cultural impact of the hormone estrogen and the possibilities of how DIY and open source tools and protocols of citizen or community science can counteract the lack of knowledge about and inaccessibility of hormones. Her research also covers the intricate system of hormone production as well as the moral and environmental dilemmas involved.

Feminist Health Care Research Group (Julia Bonn / Inga Zimprich)

As artistic research project the Feminist Health Care Research Group (FHCRG) develops empowering perspectives on health and health care in the form of exhibitions, workshops and zines. FHCRG aims to create space in which we can share vulnerability with each other, center (access) needs and break through the competitive mode of working in the arts. FHCRG questions the internalized, ableist concept of productivity that is rewarded in the art field.

The Feminist Health Care Research Group’s installation in the exhibition presents part of their zine *Being in Crisis Together*, which is based on individual and communal coping strategies, as well as a selection of interviews from their research *Practices of Radical Health Care* (2018-present).

Their research explores community-based feminist health initiatives and support systems operating along mutual, so-called radical care, anti-psychiatry and queer self-care in the past (mainly in West Berlin in the 1970s and 1980s) and also currently active initiatives, mainly through interviews with members of the grassroots health movement and by collecting artifacts of the movement. Queer and intersectional perspectives are of particular importance to them, guiding their research. The members of FHCRG consider the information gathered during the research as a set of attitudes, practices and examples that can be borrowed to alleviate the mental health crises that surround us. The mapping and the sharing of practices and grassroots health movements can also be seen as a way of caring for the health movement and amplifying its voice.

Currently the Feminist Health Care Research Group consists of artist, mother and body worker Julia Bonn and artist, mother, and deaf-blind-assistant Inga Zimprich.

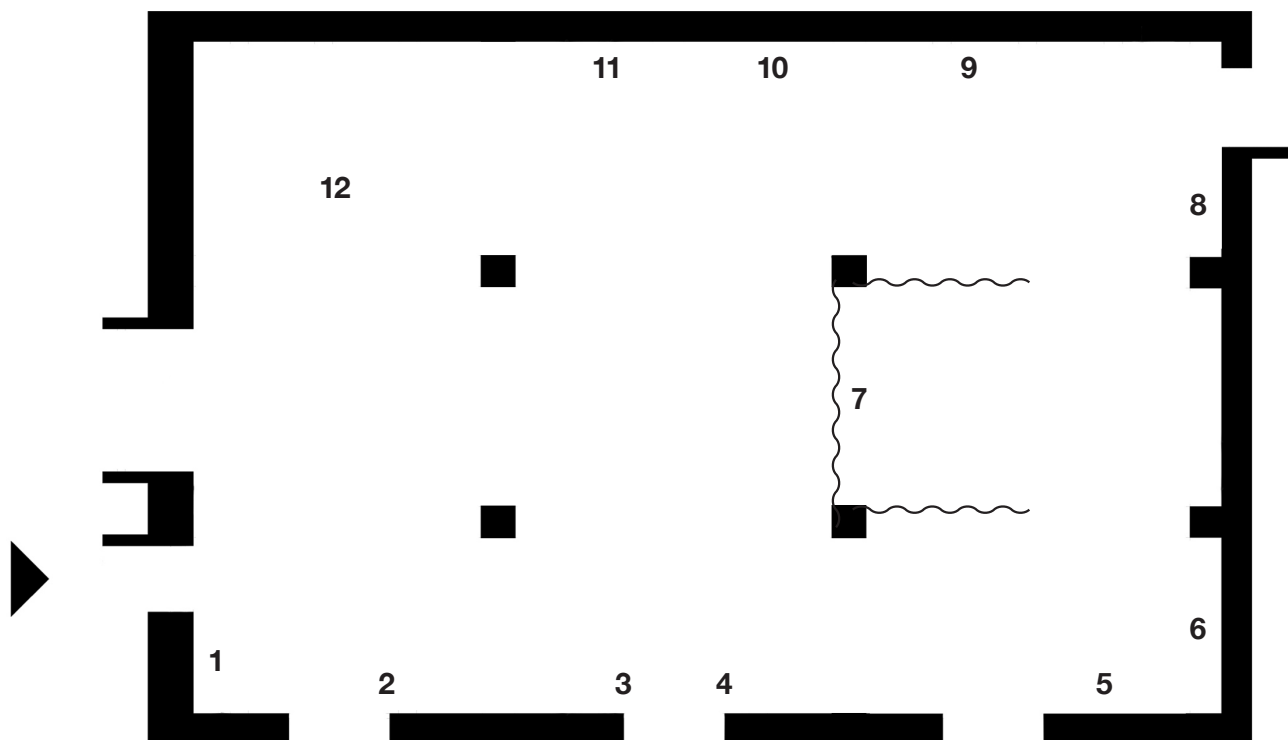
Dominika Trapp

The starting point for Dominika Trapp’s group of works entitled *Dazed and Orthorexic* was an eating disorder, namely Orthorexia Nervosa, characterized by an excessive pre-occupation with eating healthy food. In addition to her personal involvement, Trapp also explored the cultural and historical aspects of various eating disorders performed by historical women in order to expand the context of the works. In the series, the body is not primarily posited as a battlefield and a projection surface for various cultural constructions, but as a malleable and shifting material and as a fundamental site for the reclaiming of sovereignty and agency over the identity.

Texts are often integral parts of Dominika Trapp’s works and projects: for her series *Dazed and Orthorexic*, she researched records of holy-living, self-mortificating women of the Middle Ages – Christina the Astonishing (1150-1224),

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How do you throw a brick through the window of a bank
if you can't get out of bed?



1. OMARA Oláh Mara: “Na! Utoljára mentem orvoshoz!” | ‘Well! This was the very last time I visited a doctor!’, 2006
olaj, farost | oil on fibreboard, 20x16cm

A Longtermhandstand és az Everybody Needs Art jóvoltából | Courtesy of Longtermhandstand and Everybody Needs Art

Inscription on the painting: ‘Well! This was the very last time I visited a doctor! Because what did they say? That I am a patient who frequents the emergency room notoriously. They did not care about the fact that I went there with my only eye left. The doctor was not aware of this, still they were judging me. When I was staying at a hotel as a pauper, and I would kill (...) myself, when on a Saturday evening, the inflammation came to my eyes.’

2. OMARA Oláh Mara: Műtétem | My surgery, 1989

olaj, farost | oil on fibreboard, 60x80cm

Az alkotás a Romano Kher Budapesti Roma Művelődési Ház tulajdonát képezi.

The work is part of the collection of Romano Kher Roma House of Culture in Budapest

3-4. Oreet ASHERY: Revisiting Genesis, 2. rész: DuckDuckGo, Barátság | Episode 2: DuckDuckGo, Friendship
(videó | video, 8’25”); **5. rész: Archívumok, avatárok | Episode 5: Archives, Avatars** (videó | video, 10’37”), 2016

5. EPERJESI Ágnes: Felcsavart gesztus 1 | Rolled-up gesture 1, 2022
színes fotogram | chromogenic photogram, 75,5x50cm

6. EPERJESI Ágnes: Felcsavart gesztus 4 | Rolled-up gesture 4, 2022
színes fotogram | chromogenic photogram, 75,5x50cm

7. Adelita HUSNI-BEY: Az alapvető fontosságú munkáról | On Necessary Work, 2021
videó | video , 32’54”

8. Mary MAGGIC: Molecular Queering Ügynökség | Molecular Queering Agency, 2017
videó | video, 3’40”

9. TRAPP Dominika: Rajzok | Drawings, 2022-2007
grafit, papír, változó méret | graphite, paper, dimensions variable

10. TRAPP Dominika: Simone Weil emésztőrendszere | The Digestive System of Simone Weil, 2015
kazein rétegetelt lemezen | casein on plywood, 80x100cm

11. TRAPP Dominika: Középkori női misztikusok bélszervei | Organs of Medieval Female Mystics, 2015
kazein rétegetelt lemezen | casein on plywood, 100x125cm

**12. Feminist Health Care Research Group (Julia BONN / Inga ZIMPRICH):
Együtt lenni a válságban | Being in Crisis Together**, 2020
Radikális egészségügyi gyakorlatok | Practices of Radical Health Care, 2018-
változó méret | dimensions variable