

Marta Blue
Summer of Fear
Curated by Alex Urso

Digging down deep to understand our hidden desires, looking at their less comforting aspects, and surprising ourselves even to be the source of those dark, unspeakable visions. The artistic research carried out by Marta Blue seems to be driven by these necessities.

One of the most respected and well-known photographers of her generation, the artist (having worked as well as a creative director and photographer for publications like *The New York Times* and *Libération*) has carved out a leading role for herself on the international scene with her mysterious and surreal shots: works that feature painstakingly conceptualized staging, with the aim of bringing to life fictitious representations of reality, made up of stories and feelings that she invites the observer to recognize in himself.

“There is a limbo in our mind, a shadowy zone, where all of our fears can be found”, says the artist. *“An undefined zone somewhere between darkness and light, where our worst nightmares converge”.* Marta Blue turns her lens toward these “secret places” of the memory, observing and interpreting the emotions that buoy our existence, even – and especially – the least reassuring ones, which are brought to the surface with the intention of giving them a name, a face, a form.

THE DARK AND SURREAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF MARTA BLUE

Conceived specifically for FIUTO Art Space, the *Summer of Fear* exhibition presents a diversified selection of works. These images, some of which have never been shown before, include works from some of the most representative series of the artist's oeuvre. There's *Anatomy of Evil*, an emotional, intimate and personal archive where the line between pleasure and pain, between love and hate, becomes blurred until it disappears, and *Dark Ages*, with black-and-white images dominated by nature, amid allegories, symbolism and references to the animal world, here seen in its most dreamlike and esoteric dimension.

Finally, one special section of the exhibition is dedicated to the two most recent works, which have never been shown before: *Igor* and *As Above, So Below*, part of the series of images for which the exhibition is named. *“These are works that take on the idea of trans-generational trauma – a theory grounded in the concept of the collective unconscious developed by Jung,”* explains Marta Blue when speaking about the new shots in the show. *“For a few years now, I have been studying and practising regression hypnotherapy, trying to understand what some of my traumas have to do with, and why they are often experienced in the form of memories: are they events that I have actually experienced and that my memory has repressed, using a sort of protective selection process, or are they fears inherited from someone else? ‘Summer of Fear’ begins with these questions. It is an investigation into my unconscious family history”.*

THE ALLURE OF THE DISTURBING

In this process of meaning-making, of manifesting the unknown, and revealing what is buried within us, the staging of the composition plays a decisive role. There is nothing improvised about Marta Blue's snapshots; each element in the photograph is placed in the exact spot where it is found with the intention of bringing to life illusory images that are extremely cinematographic, but which, with their pretence, manage to touch the deepest reaches of our private sphere. Thus, the fictitious becomes a tool for delving into our fragilities and hidden dreams, with an interplay that sees a struggle between reality and appearance as they attract and repel each other, creating tension stirred up by this uncomfortable examination of that which we find disturbing.

Sometimes this effect is achieved with photographs of everyday objects that enter into a poetic and fairy-tale sphere. Other times, there are bodies, almost always those of women, that become the canvas for absurd and fascinating situations. Covered in dripping liquids, branded with unnatural markings, the protagonists of Marta Blue's works represent an almost sacred physicality, where pain

is endured and represented in composed poses, received by the subjects with the acceptance of those who abandon themselves to external evil, as a necessary way of absolution.