

## **PRESS RELEASE**

*Unconvinced Familiar: Sofya Shpurova and Jean-Baptiste Janisset*

Oxford House, London E2 6HG

10 – 25 September 2021

Fabbri Schenker Projects is pleased to present ***Unconvinced Familiar*** an exhibition by artists **Sofya Shpurova** and **Jean-Baptiste Janisset**. In the Middle Ages and early modern period, a 'familiar' was a spiritual entity that would assist witches and sorcerers in their practice of magic. The exhibition offers a glimpse into two contemporary practices, through which the artists exploration of two different mediums, paintings and lead sculpture, reflect on the different temporalities and narratives that are carried within them.

**Sofya Shpurova** is a multidisciplinary artist living between London and Moscow. Her paintings emerge from a variety of influences that span from an interest in Russian Orthodox Icon painting and mysticism, to biographical references which often place the artist at the centre of her work. Fluid brushstrokes are alternated by softer and multi-layered applications of paint, with a particular attention in the rendition of human skin, which recalls the techniques used by Old Masters painters like Agnolo Bronzino. In 'As long as snot flows' (2021), whose title reveals with both irony and irreverence the artist's exposure to vulnerability, she paints herself in a crouched position, covered with a silky fabric and socks with a punk rock pattern. While the inverted perspective may recall Russian icon paintings, at the same time the detail of the socks pinpoints the painting to modern times. She is interested in exploring the different temporalities that emerge through painting, investigating how an image comes to being. Committed to a very slow process of painting, she applies multiple layers, sometimes revisiting old paintings through the various pentimento.

**Jean-Baptiste Janisset** is a sculptor based in Marseille. He is interested in exploring what constitutes the collective memory of a place in public sculptures and architecture. His sculptures are obtained by moulding pre-existing symbols of objects, sculptures, and bas reliefs before making lead prints out of them. The artist chooses lead as his favourite medium, fascinated by its characteristics of malleability and durability. Janisset believes that today's hyper- industrialized society has had a rupture with its mystic imaginary, which his work aims at restoring. The artist is interested in the idea of bringing together the marks of various cults – archaic and modern – in syncretic communion to build a new system of personal belief. Symbols from the past are revived and reinterpreted to suggest a process of signification which is not fixed but in continuous transformation. A continuity between past and present is created by combining ancient symbols with the latest technological innovations in lead colouring.

### **Sofya Shpurova**

(b. 1996) lives and works between London and Moscow.

She graduated from the Slade School of Painting (London, 2019). Solo exhibitions include *Low Human Activity*, at Holden Gallery (Manchester, 2019).

### **Jean-Baptiste Janisset**

(b. 1990) lives and works in Marseille.

He graduated from École des Beaux-Arts de Nantes Métropole (Nantes, 2016). Solo exhibitions include *Sourire Aux Anges Du Frioul* at PAC festival, Île du Frioul (Marseille, 2020); *Sourire Aux Anges* at Atelier Chiffonnier (Dijon, 2019); *À Ma Vie*, Galerie Alain Gutharc (Paris, 2019); *Parabole du Semeur* at Espace Diamant (Ajaccio, 2017); *Terre de mémoire* at Complexe Culturel Le Centre-Bénin (Cotonou, Benin, 2016). Selected group exhibitions include: *History of Fantasy* at Everyday Gallery (Antwerp, 2021); *Possédé·e·s* at MO.CO Panacée curated by Vincent Honoré (Montpellier, 2020).