

## 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. In the current anthropological crisis we are living, the exhibition reflects on the need to restore the connection with ourselves and our collective unconscious.

Sofya Shpurova is a painter living between London and Moscow. Interested in the element of time revealed through the canvas, she approaches painting like an archaeologist who enjoys discovering the various layers of paint to investigate how an image comes to being.

Her paintings are about feelings rather than meaning. The artist is influenced by the experience of 15th century Russian icon painters who believed they were serving god through their art, sometimes without even signing their artworks. Similarly, Shpurova strongly believes in painting and is conscious of the responsibility of serving a higher purpose through it. The artist overworks her canvases, applying multiple layers and leaving traces of her decision-making process through the various pentimento. At the same time, however, she responds in a bold and irreverent way to the challenge of painting, willing to communicate nothing but painting itself.

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 sees himself as a witness to the past, a creator of syncretism between diverse beliefs and plural existences.

Janisset chooses lead as the main material for his work, fascinated by its unique properties: it was generated by the explosion of a supernova; is one of the most durable materials in the world; it is soft and malleable which means it can be morphed into different shapes. The use of lead symbolizes an intention to trigger a process of transformation within ourselves. 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).