



PRESS RELEASE

**ERICKA BECKMAN
MARIANNA SIMNETT**



Left image: Marianna Simnett, *The Udder* (video still), 2014 © the artist and Jerwood/FVU Awards
Right image: Ericka Beckman, *Hiatus* (video still), 1999 © the artist

**FACT opens 2019 programme with a major exhibition of artworks
by female artists**

What can fairy tales tell us about modern day society? A new exhibition opening at FACT Liverpool on 29 March 2019 will feature artworks by Ericka Beckman and Marianna Simnett - two female artists who both use technology and classic elements of fairy tale storytelling to explore images of the female body in modern day society.

Launching FACT's 2019 season focusing on identity, representation and gender, the exhibition will bring together works by the eminent American filmmaker **Ericka Beckman** as well as London-based artist **Marianna Simnett**, who both present strikingly different forms of visual storytelling, but equally make the female body the main player in the multi-layered fantasy worlds they create. Their works are at once alluring and repelling, sensual and troubling.



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Lesley Taker, Exhibitions Manager at FACT, said: “There couldn't be a more fitting pairing than Beckman and Simnett to open a year focusing on work produced by female-identifying artists and gender identities. Their work deconstructs and subverts grisly, aggressive fairy tales from many cultures as well as reclaiming traditionally 'male' spaces, in favour of a more feminist mythology. This exhibition captures the spirit of their form of subversive undermining, of dismantling from within, and ultimately stands as a refusal to yield to patriarchal systems which exist to conform, control and conquer.”

Ericka Beckman uses the imagery and style of early computer games - as well as the rigid structures and rules of gaming - in her works. ***Cinderella (1986)*** and ***Hiatus (1999)*** will be on display in the exhibition. Both films depict female characters who are seen never fully succeeding in satisfying the demands of the “game” they are in, providing a critique of the limitations and demands placed on women in society.

Marianna Simnett combines mythology and surgery to create tales of morality. Themes of corruption and innocence depict illness and disease, commenting on gender divides in our cultures. FACT will display two films by Simnett - ***The Udder (2014)*** and ***Blood (2015)***, as well as the sound and light installation, ***Faint with Light (2016)***. Her films include children singing cruel playground chants, jarring with uncompromising close-ups of surgery and blood, while in ***Faint with Light (2016)*** we hear Simnett closing her airway and hyperventilating, inducing her body to faint repeatedly.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive public programme exploring gender identities, female archetypes and fairy tales. A series of talks, live events, building takeovers, films and workshops, developed in collaboration with local partners and FACT's Learning groups, will form a dynamic scholarly level programme through which to explore, understand and act on these topics and conversations.

This major exhibition follows the success of 2018's exhibition *Broken Symmetries*, a collaboration with CERN, and the immersive installation at Toxteth Reservoir, *AURORA*.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Ericka Beckman and Marianna Simnett is adapted from the exhibitions of the same name curated by Zabłudowicz Collection.



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Ericka Beckman

Over her three-decade career, Ericka Beckman's playful yet formally demanding films challenge traditional aesthetic and cultural values, that mix games with fairytales to create hybrids with new rules. Beckman uses play in every sense to shape her message. Beckman's work has been shown at festivals, museums, and galleries around the world. Her one-woman shows include: Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland, Le Magasin, Grenoble, France, the Tate Modern, London, MOCA, Los Angeles, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. She has been in four Biennials at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Her works are in the film collection of the Whitney Museum, New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, The Walker Art Center, Anthology Film Archives, plus the British Film Institute, and the Zabudowicz Collection. Amongst the numerous awards received for her work are: Two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, two New York State Council on the Arts grants, one from Massachusetts Council on the Arts, and a residency from the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France.

Marianna Simnett

Marianna Simnett lives and works in London. Through performance, video, watercolour, and installation, she challenges how bodies are perceived and imagined. Uncanny narratives display the body as a site of dispute, performing surgical interventions and gestures of collapse and ecstasy. Solo exhibitions and commissions include the forthcoming Frans Hals Museum, Amsterdam (2019), as well as Copenhagen Contemporary (2019); the New Museum, New York (2018); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2018); Zabudowicz Collection, London (2018); Matt's Gallery, London (2017); Seventeen Gallery, New York and London (2016). Her work will also be included in forthcoming group exhibitions at Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2019); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2019); Sadie Coles, London (2019).

About FACT

FACT is the UK's leading media arts centre, bringing people, art and technology together. Based in Liverpool, FACT's award-winning building houses three galleries, a Picturehouse Cinema and bar, and an independent café. Now celebrating 15 years in its Liverpool home, FACT has welcomed over 5 million visitors and commissioned and presented over 350 new media and digital artworks from artists including Pipilotti Rist, Nam June Paik, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Wu Tsang, Ryoichi Kurokawa, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Isaac Julien.

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