

SALOMÉ CHATRIOT/EMMA STERN YOUR FAVORITE WEAPON

Like all great modern love stories, it started on the internet. The world wide web had provided not only a precedent of inspiration but a medium of conversation for Emma Stern and Salome Chatriot. The two artists, never meeting in analog, had developed an affinity for one another virtually—buoyed by affection for and obsession with the future of avatars, and cyborgs as both digital extension and physical materialization. When the matriarch of New Galerie matchmade their meeting on a particularly innocuous Parisian evening, the two artists melded together, their circuitry aligning and functional energy increasing. This was not just a meeting of minds, but an exhale of comfort: two idiosyncratic creatures had found one another.

Your Favorite Weapon is a culmination of profound respect and dialogistic probing of technological determinism beyond political rhetoric, instead focusing on humanistic effects. Each artist is acutely aware of the possibility of The Simulation and finds life a cavalier opportunity for agency. Maybe nothing matters, which paradoxically means it all does. Our experience of nothingness is finite and yet, perpetuated by an undying system not withheld from biological boundaries. Therefore, we engage in freedom beyond a system greater than our general knowledge of formation—a grand opportunity to create bodily extension beyond atomic understanding.

In this series, Stern's Lava Babies, which have wrangled dragons, pirated booty, and conquered elvish home economics, have taken up arms—sort of. These weapons aren't meant to inflict harm but play infinite games, constructed of the same mushy lava that builds her Lava Ultimate Extended Universe. The artist, which has successfully blurred the lines between existing and presenting, dives into the need for armor in apperception. It's an inherently feminine reaction, though Stern's off-brand feminism has no interest in irreverent preaching. The babies exist within their own philosophical dogma, Stern capturing snapshots of unbothered, heavily outfitted ladies going about their business within the fantastical world she has developed. Angie, Gia, Nikki and Sophia, brand new self-modeled characters, pick up their morningstar just as they pick out their shoes: with intention and affinity for flair. Babies look good, feel good, and cause maximal harm with minimal damage. Stare at them, fear them, be attracted to them, and know that, like Roko's Basilisk, they'll cause you no harm if you submit to their will. Hecatomb is appreciated, smash a like, ogle if you may. They're not here for you, you are here for them.

Chatriot's favorite weapon, milk, emerges in new modalities. Her previous series, *Fragile Ecosystems*, takes a pause, while *Snack Machine* Series creates visual separation from *Fragile's* physical reactive sensory production and the opaque body anonymity of *Fetish Goddess* Series. *Snack Machine* is a stark deviation from the corporeal anthology of Chatriot's portfolio and a deft expansion of the universe she's built. Anonymity of her previous cherry-picked appendages swirling amongst digital space subsides as *Snack Machine* pulls back, in full view of the Magna Mater weapon she's become. Is she human? Is she an android? The bionic Gaea of *Snack Machine* exists within the metaled dark matter aluminum setting on full view for audiences to determine. Chatriot, who often vacillates between a person and a symbiotic tool in her performance work, seems increasingly willing to let her audience view the entirety of her digital characters, leaving all but a face in absence of didactic determinism. The calotropis procera milk-producing plant combined with Chatriot's biometric data never aims to hurt but instead, liberate from extimacy—a Hera of a Digital Garden of the Hesperides. It is here that we drift away in the universe, watching Chatriot's cyborgs contort and expand, us floating away through the nothingness of reality. In contrast, the digital realm finds tangibility in the milky bullwhips which emerge from the digital realm of *Fetish Goddess*. It is a treat for us Fetish Plebians to gawp at, an almost comically toothless demand for worship, since we can't help but bow down.

Alexis Schwartz, New York, August 2022

Your Favorite Weapon opens at New Galerie in Paris, France September, 10, 2022- October, 15, 2022