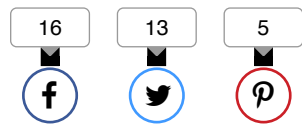


marianna simnett talks twisted fairytales ahead of E.A.T. / ENGADIN ART TALKS



## marianna simnett talks twisted fairytales ahead of E.A.T. / ENGADIN ART TALKS



2020 marks the tenth edition of the renowned E.A.T. / engadin art talks

(<https://www.designboom.com/tag/engadin-art-talks/>). taking place on january 25th and 26th, 2020 in zuoz, switzerland, the annual art, architecture, design, film, science, and literature forum and festival provides an interdisciplinary platform for global dialogue on a spectrum of creative fields and a catalyst for new ideas, discourses and trends.

since its inception in 2010, engadin art talks (<https://engadin-art-talks.ch/>) has invited more than 150 speakers to present their ideas and visions on socially-relevant themes that continuously seek to inspire and surprise. each year, a new theme guides the conversations and this year 'silent – listen' determines the framework. the 2020 programme is curated by daniel baumann (director kunsthalle zürich), bice curiger (director foundation van gogh arles), hans ulrich obrist (artistic director, serpentine galleries london) and philip unsprung (dean of architecture at eth zürich).

you can see the [programme in full](https://engadin-art-talks.ch/en/engadin-detail/silent-listen.html) including a [list of all speakers here](https://engadin-art-talks.ch/en/engadin-detail/silent-listen.html) (<https://engadin-art-talks.ch/en/engadin-detail/silent-listen.html>).



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speakers from a range of creative fields will discuss the 2020 engadin art talks theme, 'silent – listen'

'*silent – listen*' will be live-streamed online and is [viewable here \(https://engadin-art-talks.ch/\)](https://engadin-art-talks.ch/). it aims to explore the many aspects and relationships of silence and listening – with speakers including cyrill gutsch, rolf sachs, isabel mundry, and london-based artist marianna simnett. in advance of the forum, designboom spoke with simnett to discuss her recent short film 'the bird game', a wicked fairy tale in which a loquacious and bloodthirsty crow lures six children to a secluded mansion and snares them in a sequence of deranged games.



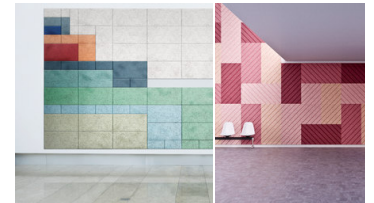
still from the bird game by marianna simnett  
images courtesy the artist and the jerwood/FVU awards

**designboom (DB):** where did the inspiration behind your latest film 'the bird game' come from and how did you start to work on it?

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**CATHAY PACIFIC**  
MOVE BEYOND

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**MS:** it wasn't a move. my first film the udder, 2014 casts cow's udders and children as the lead protagonists. I always introduce an element of chaos on my film sets, be it children, animals, knives, rain, cockroaches, surgery, death. when I've used my own body, it's usually been because I wouldn't put another body through those enduring or painful procedures. I can use myself as a guinea pig, but I'm not ready to go to jail.



blue roses, 2015, video still. courtesy the artist and comar

**DB:** in your previous works 'udder', 'blood' and 'blue roses', it is hard to gauge whether disease and contamination are damning or liberating states. is it your intention to be ambiguous?

**MS:** I see disease and contamination as a hopeful reality. I am against closed borders and try to emphasise the chimeral, fluid, metamorphosing states of bodies. so often we try to deny the colonies of bacteria swarming through us, the very many beings that make up who we are. forcing bodies into boxes leads to violence on a greater level.

**DB:** are you cynical about the human condition?

**MS:** no. are you?

**DB:** where does the medical research that goes into your work come from? do you study the body yourself?

**MS:** I get sucked into medical stories, but not only from a scientific perspective. I love learning bodily secrets and probing forbidden recesses of the body and brain. it makes me feel frightened and gives me a weird high. I use the operating theatre as a platform upon which I can cut up bodies and put them back together again in strange ways.

in the needle & the larynx, artist marianna simnett has a surgeon inject her larynx with botox, a procedure usually undergone by people wanting their voices to be lower. shot in excruciating slow motion, the surgeon's needle enters, probes, then withdraws from her throat. a soundtrack details the surgical description of the procedure with a pop song about botox, sung by simnett in her newly deepened voice.

video courtesy of film london (<https://vimeo.com/filmlondon>)

**DB:** how important is it to you to create visceral reactions in your audience?

**MS:** it's important to create experiences that can be felt through skin. I want gooseflesh. viscera comes from the thought that the bowels were the seat of emotion. viscera, internal organ. my work doesn't teach lessons. it comes from the strange sticky feelings that everyone knows but is taught to ignore. I don't go out of my way to find new tricks to make people faint. those reactions are aftereffects. the body says 'stop. enough. I surrender'.



blood, 2015, video still. courtesy the artist and the jerwood/fvu awards

**DB:** has your work ever taken you to a point that even you, yourself, have felt uncomfortable?

**MS:** personal discomfort is my main ingredient.

**DB:** have you ever considered embarking on a full-feature length film?

**MS:** yes...



E.A.T. / engadin art talks (<https://engadin-art-talks.ch/>) is an annual forum and festival for art, architecture, design, fashion, film, science, and literature which takes place in zuoz, switzerland. E.A.T.'s mission is to provide an interdisciplinary platform for a global dialogue on the arts and different creative fields. internationally recognized for

its line-up of leading artists, architects, writers, scientists, and disruptive minds from all over the world, E.A.T. has invited so far more than 140 speakers that have presented their ideas and visions on challenging social relevant themes since its inception in 2010. E.A.T. was founded by cristina bechtler together with hans ulrich obrist.

**information:**

**event:** E.A.T. / engadin art talks (<https://engadin-art-talks.ch/>)

**dates:** 25th – 26th january 2020

**location:** zouz, switzerland

**address:** engadin art talks / E.A.T.

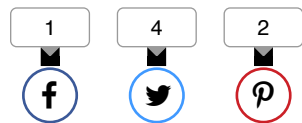
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jan 21, 2020



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