

PRESS RELEASE**PROUDICK***Today but not today***2 October - 6 November 2021***You do not have to be good.*

— Mary Oliver, 2004

Today but not today is the third solo exhibition by PROUDICK, the collaborative practice of artists Lindsey Mendick and Paloma Proudfoot. An immersive display of teenage nostalgia and self-discovery, the show follows from their eponymous exhibition here in 2018 and an off-site project with the gallery at Ballon Rouge Club, Brussels in 2019.

Furnished with large-scale, cosmic interventions to the gallery space and an array of clothing, ceramic, embroidery and stained glass works, *Today but not today* explores the alluring yet baited image of adulthood we consume in our adolescent years, its compulsion toward glossy standards of self-improvement and the mercurial worlds of futurism and desire it manifests in. The exhibition draws a parallel between these personal influences to historical visions of the future, particularly in '60s design and '90s futurism. The works question the shared tendency to envisage a life of linear progress towards more ordered and mess free living, interrogating the aspiration towards 'cleaner' living.

Fantastical and introspective, PROUDICK's exhibition-making is at once deeply autobiographical and universal, tracing the visual language of their projected future selves through a colourful and anxious continuum of pop stars, Zodiac signs and retro interior design. Immediately, we are struck by the looming palmist hand that soars above the gallery space, detailed with fortune lines and harbinger of three hanging ceramic lampshades, at once a mystical and transcendent form as it is arresting and imposing — a metaphor for the scale, presence and illusion of control embedded in our coming-of-age desire for the future, as well as the divine abstractions we employ to continually excuse its failure to arrive, no matter how delusional they may be.

This contradictory impulse — between nostalgia and futurism, public and private — is mirrored in the hard-edged but softly coloured platforms at either side of the room. These slanted compositions echo modern furniture designs of the '50s and '60s, such as those employed by Alison and Peter Smithson in *House of the Future* (1956) — imitations of a utopian future still yet to pass, a simulation that has since been appropriated and commercialised by the space age wonder of attractions such as Disney's "Tomorrowland". In either case, we see a confluence of domestic upbringing with mass-produced, streamlined urban culture. Promises for a care-free, encapsulated future — rarely, if ever satisfied in daily life.

Amplifying the counter-cultural zeitgeist of the installation is a number of ceramics which combine popular astrology with intimate expressions of personal life and the challenges that continue to affect people across the world: self-esteem and body-image, reproductive rights and the vicissitudes and pains of young love — for many, issues pronounced in our teenage years.

The mise-en-scène created, alongside the presence of two chrome mannequins adorned with cargo pants and ceramic charms, reflecting the style of '00s celebrities such as Gwen Stefani and Christina Aguilera, is one that juxtaposes our arrested futurism with the unease of adolescent sexuality and style.

The precocious desire for maturity and libidinal freedom is further suggested through design items that elicit the manufacture of these dreams: a cocktail glass with adjoining egg cup, slim fast cans, a dish for exactly six almonds and teenage magazines encouraging the burgeoning sexuality of its readership. Ridden with diet-culture anxieties and sexual naivety, these quasi-functional objects reflect the conundrum of choosing between what is typically seen as “good” or “bad” behaviour for women. Mirrored in the symbol of the sieve or scale, historical symbols for free will and discernment, the glitched line of their embroideries present fragmented female figures caught between different expectations of who they should come to be.

Framed as a chronicle of their own exposure to these manufactured dreams, *Today but not today* presents a nostalgia for our past — both personal and social — and the naive expectations of our future that continue in the present. Showcased through effuse and colourful worlds alive to the potential of movies, advertisements, science fiction and pop music to influence these narratives, it is an exhibition which nonetheless celebrates an unforgiving and exultant feminism that entwines tragedy and crisis with love, optimism and happiness. Recognising, in the words of American poet Mary Oliver, that despite it all, “You do not have to be good.”

PROUDICK is the name of the single artist identity assumed through the collaborative work of artists and friends Lindsey Mendick and Paloma Proudfoot. Solo exhibitions include *Of All the Things I've Lost*, Hannah Barry Gallery at Ballon Rouge Club, Brussels BE (2019) and *PROUDICK*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London UK (2018).

Lindsey Mendick (b. 1987, London) lives and works in Margate. Mendick received an MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art, London. She was the recipient of the Henry Moore Foundation Artist Award in 2020, the Alexandra Reinhardt memorial award in 2018 and was also selected for Jerwood Survey 2019 and the Future Generations Art Prize 2021. Recent solo exhibitions include: Goldsmiths CCA, London (2020); Eastside Projects, Birmingham (2020); Space, Ilford (2019); Castor Projects, London (2019); The Turnpike, Leigh (2018); Zabudowicz Collection, London (2018); Visual Arts Center, Austin, Texas (2016); and STCFTHOTS, Leeds (2015). She has previously been commissioned to make new projects that included ceramic workshops at Kunstraum, London; The Turnpike Pottery, Leigh and for the Cheltenham Council. Her works are held in the Arts Council Collection (UK) and Government Art Collection (UK).

Paloma Proudfoot (b. 1992, London) lives and works in London. Proudfoot received an MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art, London. She was recipient of the Micro Residency Award in Edinburgh in 2017 and the Sculpture Town Artist Award in Harlow in 2018. In 2018, Proudfoot completed the Thun Ceramic Residency, Bolzano, Italy, and in 2019, at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (with Stasis) and Moly Sabata Residency, France; they have also completed residencies at The Work Room in Glasgow (2017 & 2018). Recent solo and duo exhibitions include TJ Boulting, London (2021); Soy Capitán, Berlin (2021, 2019 & 2018); Editorial, Vilnius (2021); Hannah Barry Gallery at Ballon Rouge Club, Brussels (2019); Cob Gallery, London (2018); The Royal Standard, Liverpool (2017); May Projects, London (2016); and TANK Gallery, London (2015). As well as her solo sculptural practice, Proudfoot has a number of ongoing collaborations; including with the sculptor Saelia Aparicio; with the artist and choreographer Aniela Piasecka; and with the performance group Stasis, of which she is a co-director.