



**JEFF Marfa Presents,  
Soft Anatomy  
May 5th - July 1st, 2022  
Amy Butowicz, Victoria Dugger & Aurora Pellizzi**

On May 5th, JEFF opens a three woman show entitled, "Soft Anatomy" featuring the work of Amy Butowicz, Victoria Dugger and Aurora Pellizzi. Working in painting, sculpture, and textiles, these artists are aligned in their relationship to the body, specifically the female body. Existing between abstraction and representation, the realms they inhabit are hermetic but not impervious, a space we're invited to access with these defiant, visceral and expansive works.

Aurora Pellizzi's large felt tapestries are all-encompassing, a universe of elemental forms that thwart our sense of the cosmic order. Exploring indigenous fertility rites in her volumetric geometries, fundamental shapes posture as both sacred vistas and the female anatomy. A triangle represents a landscape or a woman, conflating femininity and the earth, embodiment and allegory, figure and ground. With her serpentine allusions Pellizzi resists a codifying of the feminine, privileging an animistic belief in destruction and creation. Pellizzi embraces these dualities, finding unity in the feminine, visualized in these tactile totems.

Whereas Pellizzi's anatomy is referenced in pared down configurations, Victoria Dugger's bodies are embellished and bursting at the seams. Flesh and guts are bedazzled with pearls and ribbons, all dolled up for our regard. Reclining on chairs, her anthropomorphic half bodies expose their insides out, allowing vulnerability, encouraging empathy. But this posturing is not passive, while hearts may be open, decorated with gingham, glitter and braids, these bodies are on fire; their presence is resistance. For Dugger, "Reclaiming the female body, the Black body, the disabled body is an act of defiance. When you are part of these marginalized communities, you are taught by the dominant society that you're deviant and that deviance is something to be feared."

In Dugger's painting entitled, "The Space Between," we see a picnic blanket, a picket fence, blue sky, butterflies and green grass. Flowing out of the ghostly figure on the blanket is a glorious ribbon of blood and guts; our humanity, and below, a glittery dark shadow; a reminder of the thin veil between ourselves and the (deviant) other. With these works Dugger transmogrifies fear, expelling it into the ether with her feminine wiles, transmuting it to insight and communion. Dugger turns her bodies inside out and outside in with her intimate anatomies, and in the process, unifies us.

With names like "Swallowed Up Last", "Dream Dancer" and "Pliant Underthings", Amy Butowicz's amorphous sculptures with pointy heads and bulbous limbs, implicate the corporeal while not directly exposing it. Instead, she dresses up appendages in pink and purple gear as if they were off to the races. The attire suggests athleticism, the theatrical or domestic trimmings while their architecture hints at more perilous pursuits. The works both fend off and invite, hide and reveal; their surfaces are rough, while their dressings are soft and translucent. A draped wall work entitled, "Long Hair Fantasy," basks in the absurdity of our desires and reminds us that the body can only contain so much. These contradictions define the work, correlating pain and pleasure, masculine and feminine, animate and inanimate. Their affectations recall the flesh, infer danger and betray our human frailties, proposing the body as host to logistics, satire and objecthood.

With varying relationships to the figurative and the abstract; all three artists take as a starting point the experience of living in a female body. Pellizzi's woman is immersed in numinous nature, she's a mountain, a tree, a river, companion to the venomous serpents of the plains; she is to be feared. In her chthonic tapestries the feminine cosmos is materialized; life, death and rebirth embodied within her emblematic reliefs. Dugger's reclamation of the body is exuberant, celebratory, girlish and fierce. By dissecting and embalming the body's innards out, with her surrealist figures she reifies the corporeal as perfect, whole, one. Butowicz's anatomies are theatrical and exotic. The feminine form is rendered genderless, but for their decor. In her caricatures lie our fantasies of perfection, power and pleasure, urging us to accept our mortal limitations and the adaptations we concede. These artists' works, whether simplifying, gutting or ornamenting the body, all make claim to the potency of our feminine symbologies and within that expression, find liberation, resistance and joy.