

for immediate release:

**October 19 – November 23, 2013**

## **MONICA COOK**

### ***MILK FRUIT***

*Milk Fruit* is Monica Cook's most complex and ambitious work to date. Offering a complete and intricately-realized cosmology of sacrifice and reciprocity embodied by a parade of delicate, soulful animals and their jerry-built chariots, *Milk Fruit* displays the lavish craft and extravagant imagination familiar to those who have followed Cook's work.

Like the crowned queen of the state fair, a voluptuous cow posed as an odalisque issues floods of life-sustaining milk. She is borne on a litter that is reminiscent of small-town harvest festival floats, her milk lubricating the wheels and nourishing the earth beneath her. Bulbous frogs and majestic goats lend their services as rickshaw-pullers. A resplendent monkey is pampered in the upholstered confines of a mobile space-salon, equipped with porcupine-quill brushes, a champagne fountain pumping milk, and all the accoutrements necessary to keep a lady cozy and protected during a journey into the far reaches of the solar system. An interstellar crop-duster sprays a glittering mist of milk.

The guiding image here is that of the milk itself. Milk is a mystical alchemical transaction, flesh transmuted into a rich and wholesome substance in the ultimate act of caretaking. Here, milk is a sacrificial rite, the selfless surrender of one's own most intimate resources to feed another. *Milk Fruit* is animated by the spirit of potlatch, presenting an ethical universe in which wealth is measured by how much one gives away.

In the fantastical landscape of *Milk Fruit*, all living beings exist to nurture. The beings that inhabit this place are giving of themselves, just as a fallen tree rots and nurses new saplings with its body. In this ecosystem, an exposed ribcage is not morbid, but intimate. A snout encrusted with buboes elicits tenderness, not repulsion. The visible workings of anatomy are revealed, and the revelation is celebratory, infinitely accepting. Cook created this world as a tribute to the wounded, the newborn and the dying, the scarred and disfigured. It is a rare glimpse into the possibility of unconditional love.



- Sarah Lippek

This is Monica Cook's second exhibition at Postmasters. Her first show, in January 2012, was declared "Best of 2012" by Artinfo. As in that exhibition, the sculptures from Milk Fruit will become actors in Cook's forthcoming stop animation video.

Monica Cook, "Volley":

*Previously familiar to me for her large-scale hyperrealist paintings of female bodies, fruits, and octopi mashed together in neither exactly sexual, nor completely grotesque piles of flesh, Cook's January solo show at Postmasters launched the year with a bang that was never matched. Her eerie sculptures of primate- and canine-like creatures equipped with squeezable valves that made their silicone organs pulse under patchy hides of animal fur made for a kind of terrifying but also inexplicably endearing post-nature petting zoo. They also set the stage for the exhibition's most incredible beast: its titular stop-motion video, an exquisite and emotionally rich six-minute short in which the creepy creatures came to life in a dazzling cycle of death and rebirth played out in neon tones amidst swirling currents of oozing gels. Cook played on both science-fiction and nature documentary tropes, revealing her sculptures' intricate inner lives in the process.*

– - Daniel Kunitz, editor, *Modern Painters*



Postmasters Gallery  
located at 54 Franklin Street in Tribeca  
Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6  
with Thursday hours extended to 8pm  
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and image requests  
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