

**Justyna Tomczak**

## **Reflection on the exhibition “Polish misia”**

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We all of us remember Natalia LL's work showing a model consuming a banana in a sensual manner. A seemingly innocent activity becomes ambiguous. It becomes erotic. A similar mechanism is used by Borys Makary in his recent project „Polish misia”.

The artist has sought to visualise a strong relationship between women and their plush teddy bears and executed it in an original way. Aiming to emphasise the love-orientated attitude towards the toy, he photographed women licking teddy bears.

The licking in the project evokes ambiguous, perverse associations. The artist, similarly to Natalia LL, combines the act of licking with an apparently ordinary object, mainly associated with children, which, nevertheless, takes on a particular meaning in the project.

A teddy bear as such is associated with a sense of security, with childlike innocence. Juxtaposing a plush toy with the image of an adult woman may symbolise her longing for childhood. The artist assumes that, as children, girls have control over teddy bears. For the teddy bear can be exploited, and the smile does not leave its face.

A closer contact with the works reveals a deeper meaning of the plush toy. It turns out that it fulfils the function of a phantasm, not a satisfying fetish. It does not offer a possibility of fulfilling the woman's dreams, but is their mirror reflection. The teddy bear is the first object of the woman's affection. She bestows on it care, warmth and intimacy she also needs.

A superficial contact with Makary's photographs may obscure their reception, as their sexual nature occupies a central position. However, if you dwell longer on a deeper analysis of the work, it must be stressed that, as the teddy bear may be a reflection of the woman's needs, so for the man it may become an element of self-discovery.

Finally, it is worth taking up one more point: the manner of the presentation of the teddy bear. It is related to the creation of not so much a model, as a certain depiction of masculinity. Through the accumulation of various meanings, the teddy bear becomes an exemplification of the man. However, it is only a toy, an object, deprived of personality. And so the question arises: does it exist only for the woman?