

NO GATEKEEPERS OF MY HEART FRANKO B CURATED BY SERGEY KANTSEDAL KATYA KABALINA 03-05-2024 02-06-2024

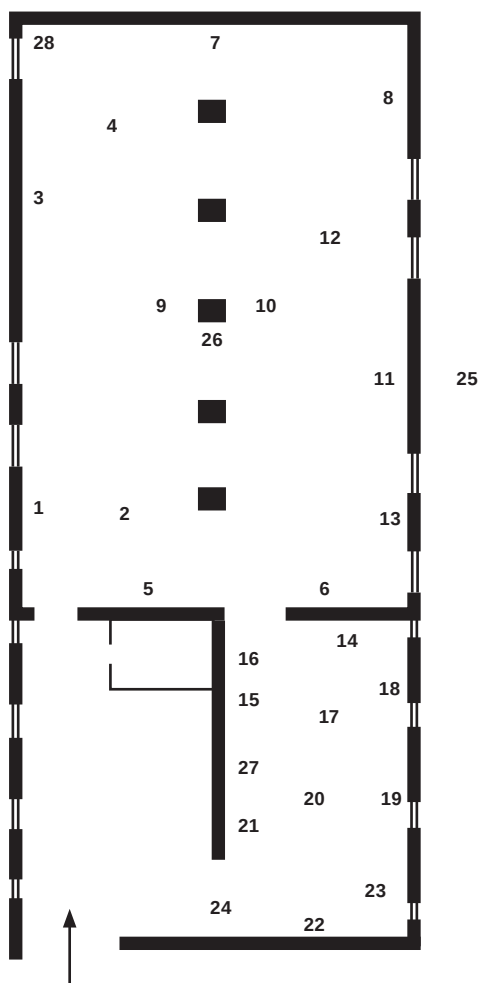
Within the scope of EXPOSED, the new international photography festival, Barriera presents the solo exhibition of Franko B (1960, Milan) titled NO GATEKEEPERS OF MY HEART. Throughout his illustrious career, Franko B has created works ranging from painting to sculpture, from stitching to videos, installations and especially performances characterized by the extreme use of the body, making him one of the most recognizable artists internationally. Franko B's practice is deeply rooted in the experiences of his personal life: the childhood trauma of domestic violence and life in an orphanage, then squats and raves, the London club scene. Or again, in the socio-political context of the 1990s, with the protest of punk culture, the queer scene, the fight against discrimination of people infected with AIDS and ethnic, racial, or sexual prejudice, as well as the conservatism and bigotry that still characterize contemporary society, even in Western countries. The themes he addresses in his works have always been life and its vanities, courage and suffering, eroticism and pain. Love, as one of the most persistent themes, is investigated in its many facets: affection, tenderness, passion, but also abandonment, loneliness, submission, and the use and abuse of power. Many of his most iconic performances, such as *I Miss You* (1999), a long silent parade in which the artist let his blood slowly drain from his veins, are characterized by a fascinating physical, scenic, and scenographic presence. At the same time irritating and touching, seductive and disarming, Franko B's practice brutally exposes the fragility of human beings, making the "unbearable bearable", as the artist puts it.

Conceived for both spaces at Barriera, the exhibition presents a body of work including paintings, stitched pieces, sculptures, installations and videos. With the exception of photographs documenting some of his performances, and resin artworks, most of the pieces have been produced in recent years in his studio in London. The exhibition project focuses primarily on the role of photography and imagery in his artistic production, serving both as a means of documenting his intimate and private life and as a record of time. A key work on display is *I am here* (2024): a school desk inside which we find a rapid video sequence, a violent flow of images that bear witness to the tumultuous historical times in which we live. The same images, reduced to a status of quasi-manifesto symbol or icon, are stitched on fabric, graffitied on mirrors and drawn on canvas. Or they take on a precise physical and sculptural form that is both dramatic and poetic as in the work *The Sleeping Beauty* (2017), which depicts with ruthless realism the body of a child drowned at sea. From the tragedy of geopolitical events to the fragile and seductive of everyday intimacy, the exhibition resolves into a tension between political and personal desire. In his life, Franko B's art and social commitment are inextricable, manifesting empathy for the weakest in the world and, at the same time, a fervent will to live and fight.

Franko B (born in 1960) was born in Milan and moved to London in 1979. His practice spans drawing, installation, performance, and sculpture. A pioneer of body art and a leading performance artist and activist, Franko B uses his body as a tool to explore themes such as the personal, political, poetic, resistance, suffering, and the reminder of our own mortality and vulnerability.

Franko B lives and works in London and is a professor of Sculpture at Albertina Academy in Turin, Italy. He is also a visiting lecturer at the Royal College of Art, London. He has presented work internationally at institutions including Tate Modern, ICA (London), South London Gallery, Arnolfini (Bristol), Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels), Beaconsfield Contemporary Art (London), Bluecoat Museum (Liverpool), Tate Liverpool, Ruarts Foundation (Moscow), PAC (Milan), Contemporary Art Centre (Copenhagen), and many more.

His works are held in collections at Tate Modern, Victoria and Albert Museum, South London Gallery, the permanent collection of the city of Milan, and at political, London.



- 1 Franko B, *Untitled*, 2017
Vintage School Bag '60-'70
leather, plastic
- 2 Franko B, from the series *Sleeping Beauty*, 2017
resin, platinum chrome plating
- 3 Franko B, *Untitled*, 2023
series of acrylic paintings on embroidered canvases
- 4 Franko B, *Object Wrapped*, 2023
canvas, glue, artist's blood, bicycle
- 5 Franko B, *Figures in Space*, 2019-2022
series of small ceramic sculptures with gilded details
- 6 Franko B, *Figures in Space*, 2019-2022
series of small ceramic sculptures with gilded details
- 7 Franko B, *Figures in Space*, 2019-2022
series of small ceramic sculptures with gilded details
- 8 Franko B, *No Gatekeepers of My Heart*, 2024
neon on steel

- 9 Franko B, *Here Comes the Rain*, 2023-2024
series of stitch drawings on vintage nightshirts
- 10 Franko B, *Here Comes the Rain*, 2023-2024
series of stitch drawings on vintage nightshirts
- 11 Franko B, *Untitled*, 2019-2020
drawing on mirror, spray cans
- 12 Franko B, *Cocks*, 2021-2024
series of ceramic sculptures
- 13 Franko B, from the series *I'm here*, 2024
wooden table
- 14 Franko B, *Love in Times of Pain*, 2008
plotter print mounted on bond,
Photography: Hugo Glendinning
- 15 Franko B, *Love in Times of Pain*, 2008
plotter print mounted on bond
Photography: Hugo Glendinning
- 16 Franko B, *Because of Love*, 2012
plotter print mounted on bond
Photography: Hugo Glendinning
- 17 Franko B, *Sono cazzi miei*, 2023
found object, black silicone
- 18 Franko B, from the series *I'm here*, 2024
multimedia sculpture, found object
- 19 Franko B, from the series *I'm here*, 2024
multimedia sculpture, found object
- 20 Franko B, *Resin*, 1999-2000
series of cast resin sculptures,
readymade objects and images
- 21 Franko B, *I Miss You*, 2005
plotter print mounted on bond
Photography: Hugo Glendinning
Palazzo delle Belle Arti di Bruxelles
- 22 Franko B, *Fuck*, 2024
paper and stitching
- 23 Franko B, *Untitled*, 2024
microphone, black silicone
- 24 Franko B, *Memory of Youth*, 2023
leather, spray paint, punk spikes
- 25 Franko B, *I'm Thinking of You*, 2022
tubular iron, gold varnishes
from a performance *I'm Thinking of You* by Franko B with
music composed and performed by Helen Ottaway
- 26 Franko B, *Untitled*, 2024
found object with cross-shaped mirror
- 27 Franko B, *Still Life*, 2005
plotter print mounted on bond
Photography: Hugo Glendinning
- 28 Franko B, *Nuvola*, 2023
ceramic

barriera

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Barriera is a non-profit space for contemporary art, founded in 2007 in Turin. Through various initiatives, shows and events, the space creates opportunities for dialogue between artists, curators and collectors to prefer contamination from other cultural areas and disciplines. Barriera promotes curatorial strategies aimed at encouraging young artists in research and directing the latter towards a production that responds to the specifics of the space starting from a process of sharing.

Barriera is curated by Sergey Kantsedal with the assistance of Yuliya Say.

Graphic design by Désirée Nakouzi De Monte.