

Katinka Simonse
Popple (2008)

"Popple" is the latest work in the Baby Bunnies series by Katinka Simonse. The Baby Bunnies series provides an analysis of the consumptive attitude that (post)modern man has taken on in relation to pets.

The pet is developing from 'man's best friend' into a completely commodified article of consumption. Pets are no longer bred purely for their function (think of for instance the duck hunt) but are also selected on their aesthetic value and the way in which the animal will fit its (future) urban environment. Hypoallergenic cats and phospholuminescent fish are just some of the tragic examples of this process.

We're currently witnessing a development which is focused on creating the 'perfect' pet. Due to breeding programs and genetic manipulation, we can recreate the pet into its 'ultimate', fantasy-based form, as resembled by (plastic) toy pets: Smooth skinned or fluffy. Candy pink or with 'natural' color patches, featuring big shiny eyes and/or limbs you can manipulate. Mankind has been trying to dominate the animal kingdom for millennia and this ongoing endeavour will eventually result in the perfect pet. A pet that can be adjusted to the wishes and desires of its owner. A pet that will be the perfect accessory in daily (social) life.

The Popple, marketed in the 80s as a teddy bear with an eversible bag, formed the inspiration for Simonse's latest work. Made from specially prepared cat and dog skin, the work shows us the impossible linking of the heart-warming imperfection of the natural animal and the artificiality of our perception of the 'ideal' pet, as a commodity, a toy.

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