Yuli Yamagata
Bruxa
Opening: September 10, 2020

MADRAGOA is delighted to announce *Bruxa*, the first solo exhibition by Yuli Yamagata at the gallery and in Portugal.

For this presentation, Yamagata created a new group of works that give shape to a very personal universe, embodying her peculiar glowing visual imagery. The big bang of this universe, pulsating with colours and shapes proliferating in paintings, wall pieces and soft sculptures wrapped by textiles, is triggered by the bewitched imagery brought about by Halloween, or "Dia das Bruxas," as it is called in Portuguese, referring to the day when the upside-down world comes true, with its dark, macabre and creepy shade.
The whole gallery seems to be transformed into a haunted house: As if under a spell, objects come to life, animated by a tension that the support struggles to contain, dynamic figures and details exceeding the space of representation and contravening the laws of physics. A cob of corn exhales a hiss of smoke while soaking in a bone soup, a hissing black cat arches its back, a zombie is losing his eyeballs, charmed snakes curl up, a green monster hand with claws beckons. They are fetishes, materializations of a supertitious imagery and at the same time its antidote, thanks to their cartoonish and colorful style. The gaze bounces in every corner of the gallery to follow the echoing shapes and figures which seem to come to life and change position every time viewers turn their back.
The day of Halloween is also the artist's day of birth, a coincidence that lead Yamagata to reflect and give an interpretation to this celebration as it has been lived by her over the years, increasingly charged with an imagery created by the United States and spread all over the world through the Internet, advertisement, B-movies, comics. This shared horror and splatter vocabulary, spiced up with elements from a superstitious lexicon, provides the set of subjects for these works that are translated into Yamagata's peculiar language that blends elements from disparate sources, from Japanese mangas to technical Lycra fabric and its patterns.
The simple shapes that constitute the artist's basic plastic vocabulary – the cylinder, the circle, the drop – are flexible forms open to be modeled to give shape to parts of the human or animal body – penis, leg, tail, finger, eye, nails, blood – according to suggestions coming from Instagram, movies or simply conversations. In this case, they refer to the different nuances that compose the carnivalesque and commercial version of All Hallows' Eve – violent, goofy, sexual, shameless, funny, dark, grotesque – as well as its consumer side, evoked by the presence of food, and elements that recall the digestive and scatological process.
This series of works is nurtured by a pop imagery, globally shared, and at the same time shows the intrinsic violence with which this popular culture imposes itself. A deforming lens, Halloween becomes the point of view that reveals "a kind of schizophrenia between the fear of the end of the world and meme making about the end of the world – explained Yamagata – how schizophrenic a Halloween party in advance would look like."