



Yulia

Mahr

In the selected works of Hungarian-born British visual artist Yulia Mahr, she continues her ongoing exploration of identity, memory and belonging. But here we delve deeper in how we perceive desire and sensuality on bodies that have endured transformations through any number of lived experiences we might imagine—childbirth, migrations, ageing, illness. In her lens-based work featured here, Mahr works with a model by the name of Sarah. She creates thermal images using a camera not intended for regular photography, but as a recent exhibition explains, “used by the military to detect people crossing borders”. In my mind, Mahr invites us alongside her to expand our boundaries around ideas of desire by looking within. What makes a person desirable? Who gets to say when someone is no longer desirable, and to whom? How do we learn to renegotiate our own sense of desire for our changing, shifting bodies, and for the aspects we cannot capture in images—our interior shifts of mind and expansion of spirit? Her camera and process allow Mahr to consider the interiority of bodies, how beauty still courses through the blood in our veins even as our bodies, notably female bodies, are examined and judged as we age and encounter other physical changes. By considering things like scale of works, quality of paper and shades of greys, Mahr plays with ideas of vulnerability, but also makes us consider alternate sides of desire on bodies that we are easily conditioned by society to ignore or render undesirable.



ASKING, 2019
BELOW, 2020 (OPPOSITE)



YULIA MAHR



UNFOLD, 2021



ABOUT SARAH II, 2019–2023



ABOUT SARAH VII, 2019–2023

