



ARTISTS' BOOK

The Strangeness of Beauty by Ziba Ardalan (ed.)

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What happens when delusion and reality merge in some unthinkable combination? What is our reaction to such occurrences? When and how does thoughtful reflection replace the initial shock? What role does time play in the process? What do we learn from such incidences? The Strangeness of Beauty project was inspired by Ligeia, an engaging short story by Edgar Allan Poe, in which the Romantic writer and poet explores the interconnected aesthetic of strangeness in beauty. The variety of thoughtful contributions to the project by artists, the wider art community, and Ziba Ardalan in her introductory texts, suggest that such sensitivities are an inherent part of humanity.

Presented in 2021 as a digital magazine in twelve themed weekly issues, The Strangeness of Beauty was, after *O Sole Mio*, the second digital project curated by Ziba Ardalan during the repeated lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic. In it, contemporary artists and other art professionals consider the concept of beauty in art and in their own practice, how it appears in so many ways, and how it is usually the intriguing element of strangeness that makes the experience of true interest and value. Thus, parallels are drawn with the unprecedented challenges faced by humanity during the pandemic.

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