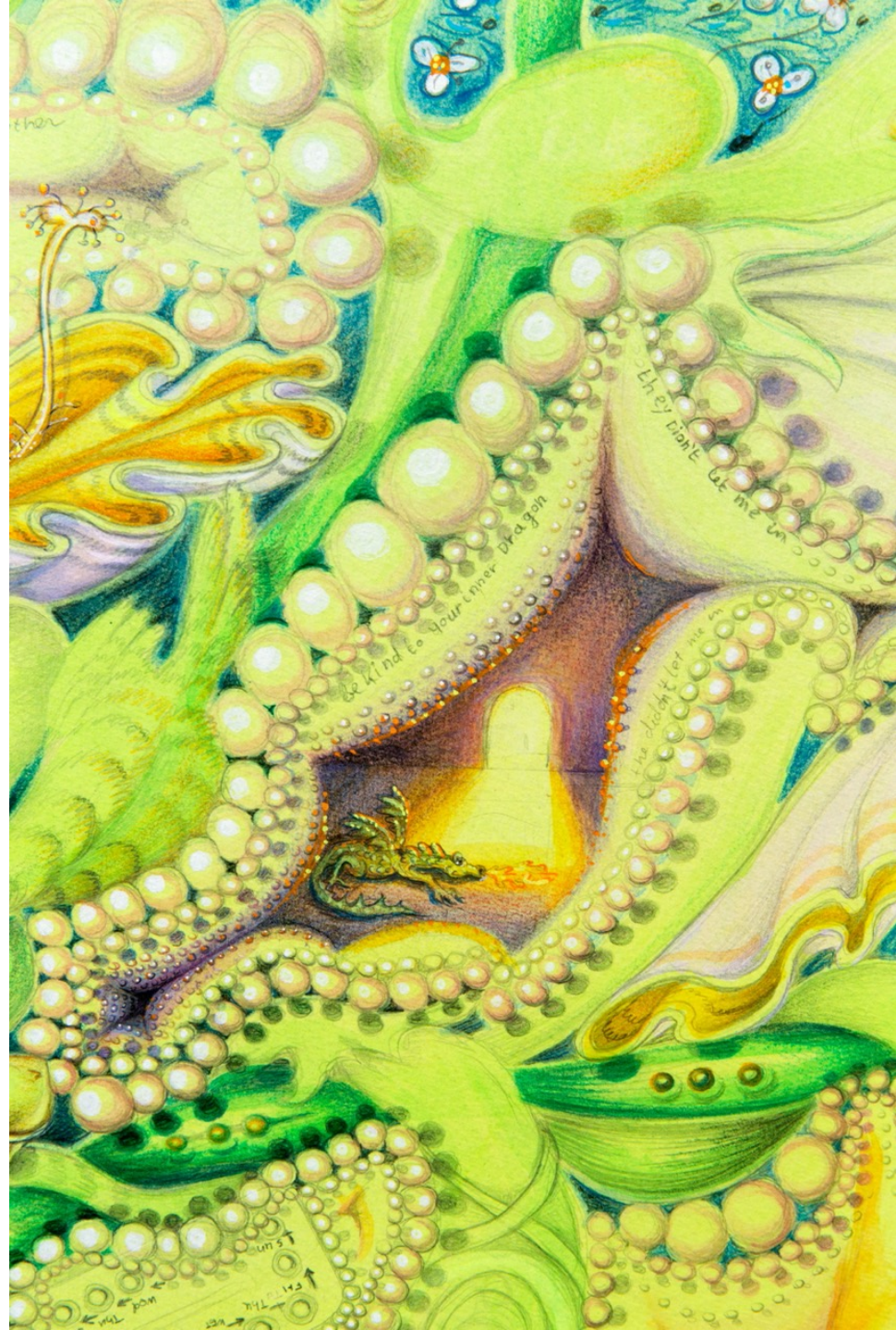


Kinke Kooi
Listening Body

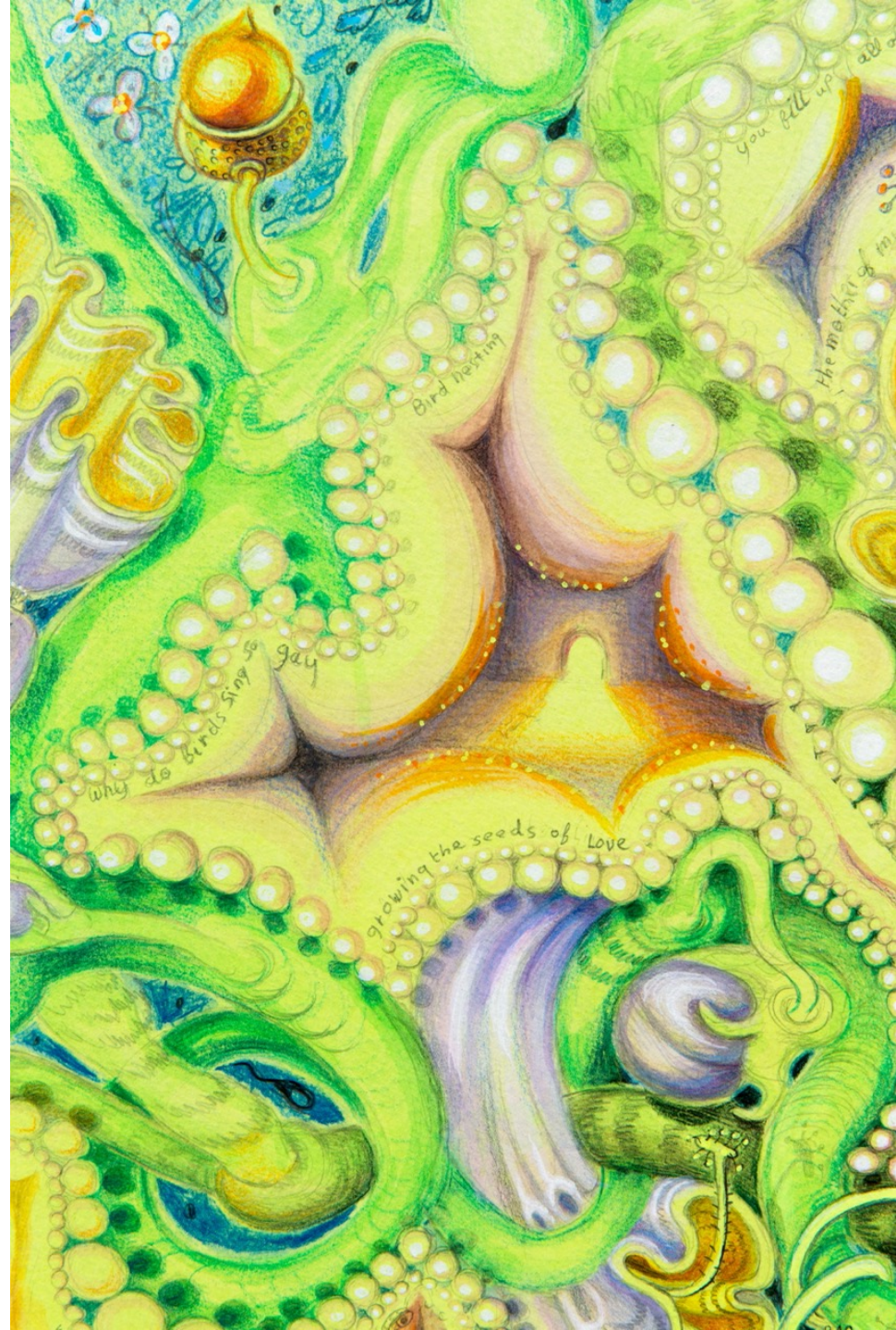
Liste Art Fair	13.–19. Juni 2022
Liste Art Fair Basel	13.–19. Juni
Liste Art Fair Basel	13.–19.



Growing the Seeds of Love, 2021
Acrylic, (colour)pencil, fineliner, gouache and collage on paper
152 x 100 cm



Growing the Seeds of Love, 2021 (Detail)



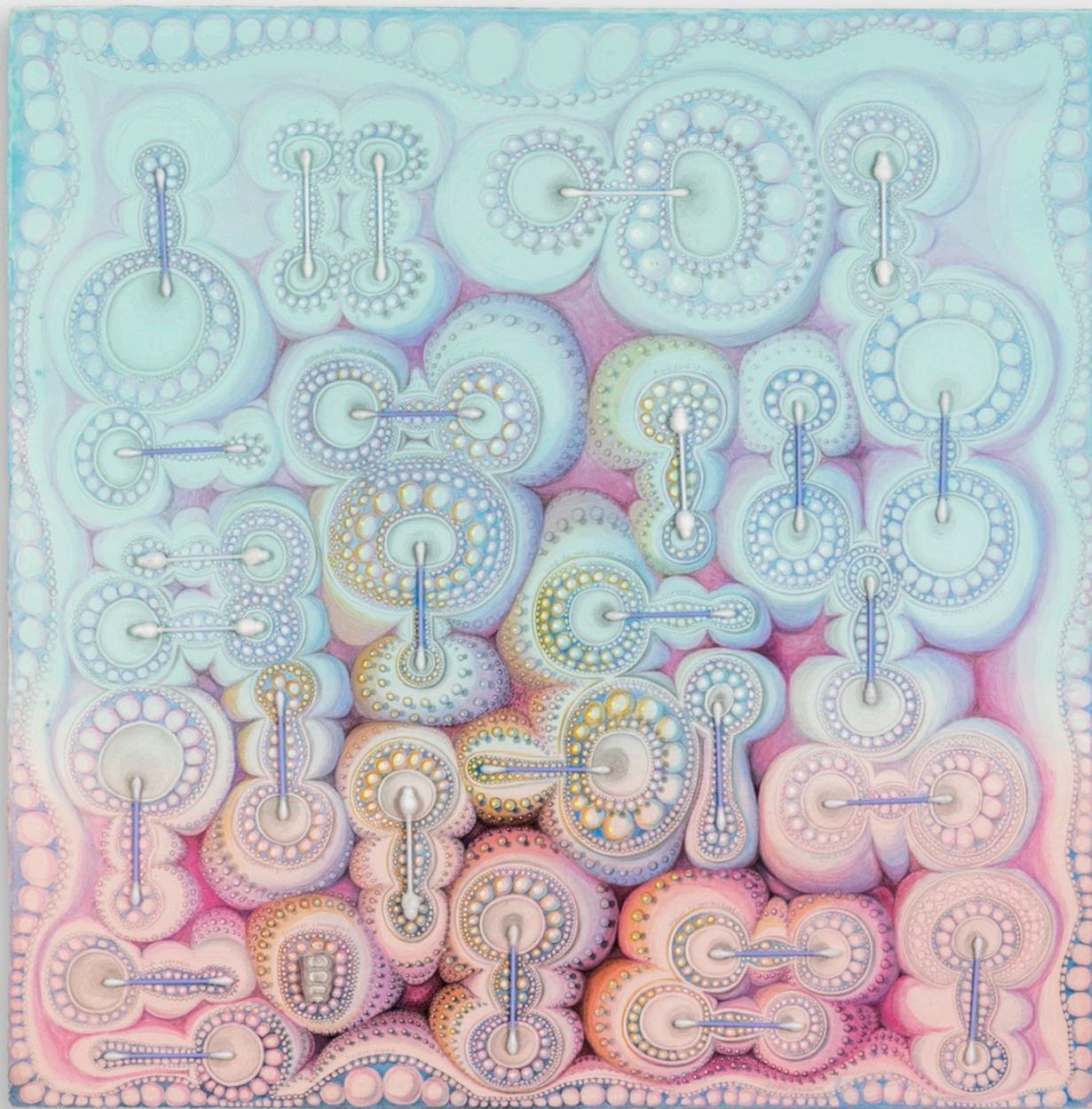
Growing the Seeds of Love, 2021 (Detail)





Listening Body, 2022
Acrylic paint, gouache, pencil on paper
28 x 21 cm

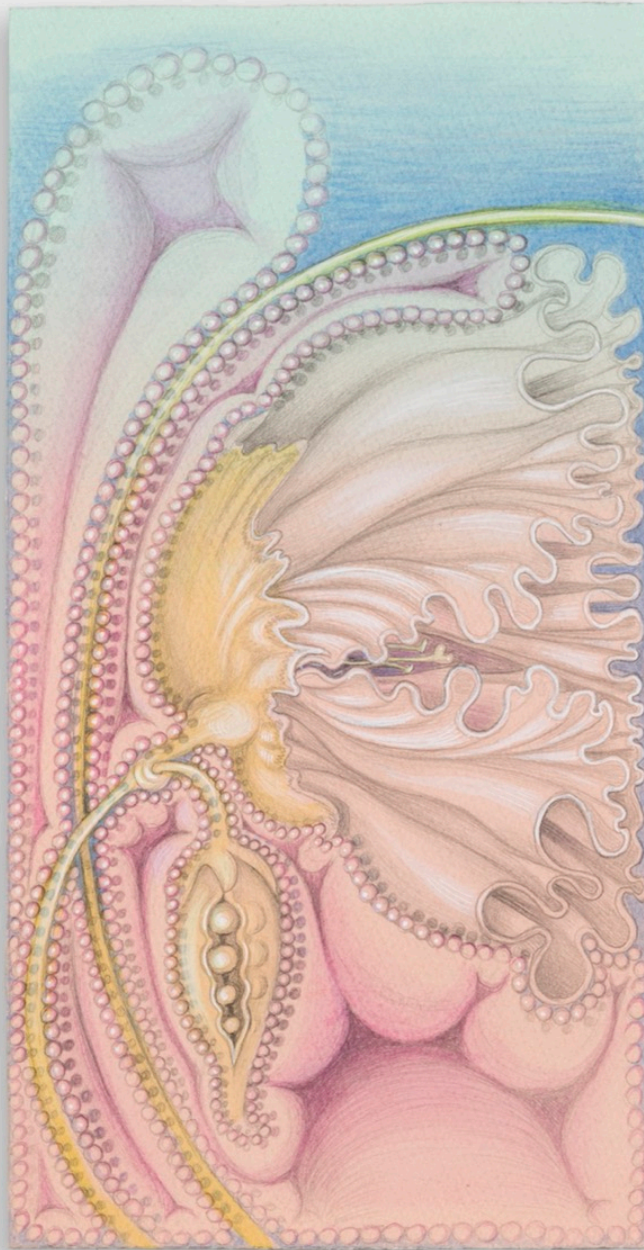




Sweet Care, 2022
Acrylic paint, gouache, (colour)pencil, q-tips on paper
66 x 65,5 cm



Visit, 2022
Acrylic paint, gouache,
(colour)pencil on paper
75,5 x 67,5 and 75,5 x 20 cm



Within, 2022
Acrylic paint, gouache, (colour)pencil on paper
31 x 16 and 31 x 13 cm



In “The Grotesk of Raising,” Kinke Kooi’s solo exhibition—and her West Coast debut—the Dutch artist deploys the figurative verisimilitude of botanical and anatomical illustration while demonstrating the slipperiness of symbolism and the potency of metamorphosis.

Kooi’s compact arrangements of forms, primarily executed in acrylic, gouache, and colored pencil, often reach to the furthest edges of her unframed surfaces, evoking riotous processes of cellular replication. A tidal cornucopia of marine flora, mussels, and pearls bulges outward in *Birth of Venus*, 2020, and wreathes the painting’s central motif: a sinuous, equivocal cavity. One could easily label this horror vacui, yet the exquisitely detailed, miniature household scenes and stage sets nestled within the folds of Kooi’s more voluminous organic forms imply a fascination with portals, which lead into all manner of vast psychic spaces. Gnomic questions, aphorisms, and individual words handwritten in pencil are likewise scattered throughout. The phrase “all of my kindness is taken for weakness” reappears in several discrete paintings, a reproach that betrays the complexity of this fecund exhibit.

In *Why Do Men Have Nipples?* (2), 2020, and *Immanence* (2), 2018, the dominant subjects—nipples and strawberries, respectively—are submerged into patterns that echo their contours, just as the ripples on a lake’s surface reiterate the shape and power of a disturbance. It is as if each object in Kooi’s universe projected its own aura: The strawberries in *Immanence* discharge undulating waves of strawberry-ness in all directions. Kooi seamlessly integrates delicate found materials such as buttons and fragments of sea-urchin shell into the surface of *Why Do Men Have Nipples?* (2), quietly confounding the viewer’s ability to distinguish “real” objects from their painted likenesses. Her works consistently reveal that the boundaries between what we imagine, perceive, and actually see are constructed and hazier than we presume.



The Dutch artist Kinke Kooi's drawings, informed by a complementary beach-house color palette and featuring elements of collage, initially come across as an expressive upgrade of Ernst Haeckel's depictions of nature. To a certain extent, this is accurate, except all of Kooi's plants seem to originate from the Garden of Desire. Grotesque of raising (2), 2018, for instance, stars a bean pod burst open from the abundance of growing peas, while its white blooms extend their chalices toward the full moon. Enveloped in a tender embrace with a fleshy, milky membrane, the central tendril is further studded with blushing-pink pearls, shifting the richness of the work's evocation of a double allegory of carnal desire and motherhood even further toward an allusion to scopophilia.

The versatility with which Kooi exploits her repertoire is demonstrated by the wonderful Hygiene (3), 2015. Here the mass of flesh isn't swallowing up anything but is, rather, sufficient unto itself, whirling upward like opulent draperies and forming sensitive rises and declivities that are decorated with drawn-on pearls and pasted-on seashells. Q-tips, affixed to the paper, then carefully tickle these places. It is a true challenge, when beholding these works, to pull oneself away from their absorption with detail, especially because the artist does not trade in the libidinous exaggeration of tropes like flowers and decoration but rather illuminates the body as an intelligent and complex host—for babies, for hormone-cocktail pills, and, of course, for lovers. Kooi, who has been around since the '80s, may fall into that category of artists who pursue their practice in obscurity for years until a discursive trend suddenly shines a light onto their work, but made clear here is that it's a position ripe for plucking.

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