

clean street, dirty feet

freja sofie kirk

solo exhibition

2 october — 14 november 2026

The new video work *Lunch in the clean world* (2026) recalls two recent scandals involving high-rise buildings designed by superstar architect Rafael Viñoly. In 2014, the distinctive concave shape of his 20 Fenchurch Street in London revealed to produce such a powerful concentration of solar reflection—a light projection—that it resulted in a powerful “death ray,” causing damage in the streets below. Garbage issues plagued his 432 Park Avenue in New York when trash bags disposed of in its custom-built chute would accelerate so dramatically that their landing would produce a bomb-like sound. *Lunch in the clean world* conflates these evocative scenes in a short, high-intensity video loop that emphasize what and who cities must obscure in order to remain constantly presentable—not as physical spaces where fleshy bodies live and work, but as idealized images.

This is emphasized in the video when the artist restages historic press images from the site of the death ray, the camera moving with a ray of light as it slowly travels across the time-frozen bodies of smoking and lunch-eating workers. The ray lights up these bodies until the image effectively washes them out into a pure, sanitized white. Over the course of the loop, subtle noises of plastic culminate in the sound of a full-scale explosion, though the dark interior of a garbage chute is revealed only momentarily. Kirk’s juxtaposition suggests that cleanliness is best understood not as a state but rather as an ongoing effort to do away with waste—itsself the result of gendered maintenance labor by many bodies under capitalism.

Accompanying the video is the photographic series *Soles*, featuring snapshots of the artist’s dirty feet. The images are cropped so closely that they seem nearly decontextualized—strange objects hovering above virtual backgrounds. These images are made specifically for fetish websites, where they function as an on-demand archive for desiring customers. Once sold anonymously, Kirk reactivates her images as an editioned series for the white cube, where they become objects of a different kind of contemplation—and consumption. Through a logic of editioning (new photo is exhibited only when a former is sold), these images serve to subsidize artistic labor while simultaneously becoming products of it. Competing in two markets, in various stages of virtuality, they have the capacity to become ultra-successful image commodities exactly by revealing their social self-production.

Behind clean objects as well as dirty images, Kirk shows us, there exist numerous modes of labor at various stages of visibility, but to equate their properties often proves highly futile. The artist’s work gravitates towards the discrepancies between such properties—spaces where material reality is suddenly, and uncannily, revealed as a space of countless image fictions and contradictions.

text by Jeppe Ugelvig