

Magdalena Kita **ABSOLUT VANILLA**

26 October – 01 December 2018

Opening: 25 October, 6 pm

Magdalena Kita's paintings are charged with grotesques and explicitly erotic representations and make multiple references – to children's book illustrations, Art Brut, comic and trash culture, and Christian icons of saints – that link to various cultural narratives. The exhibition **ABSOLUT VANILLA** at SETAREH GALLERY, whose title refers to a performance in 2004 with the liquor of the same name, presents new works by the Polish artist (b. 1983 in Debica, PL, lives in Cologne). "Vanilla" is also a term from the BDSM scene for "normal" sexual practices. In her very direct depictions, Kita counter-acts stereotypical gender roles and societal power structures with a thoroughly feminist perspective.

The motifs, emblazoned on wooden panels, shine in pop colours on golden backgrounds. The raw forms of these panels were made in Poland and subsequently engraved and painted with egg tempera and gold leaf. Kita formally takes up the worship and production of icons that is still active today in her arch-Catholic home country. In this way, the aura and therefore the virtue of the image in the adoration of the holy icons, such as the 'Black Madonna of Częstochowa', is brought to representation through its materiality.

Moments between worship and seduction, as they occur in icon worship (gold), interest Kita on various levels: in "faith", for example of the Scientology sect (usage of the specific blue tone), in fairy tales, in commercials, in online dating, in capitalism (money), etc. The depictions, which often deal with moral aspects, while sometimes showing something immoral, reflect our consumer society, which is shaped by cyber realities and, according to Kita, in need of new icons.

Several of the panel paintings are an homage to the children's book 'Le Petit Prince', beloved by adults, whose motifs she meaningfully modifies in order to fluently transform them into her pictorial language. The little prince is finally able to unfold from his rose and turns into a manga-like cat-eyed princess who, in a disturbing way, commits sodomite acts with the fox. The sexual connotations, which for Kita are already contained in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's classic, thus come to a caricaturing as well as exaggerated pictorial awareness.

Many of the works, decorated with golden lettering and meanders, have the form of iPhones, with some of them including speech bubbles, familiar from mobile phone and Internet chats, symbolic for the image and communication carriers omnipresent in our society. The breaks that can be seen in some of the pictures may, alongside iPhone cracks, also be an indication of the icon destruction in the Iconoclasm – especially the iconography of Byzantine icons served Kita as inspiration. The pictorial motifs, created in intuitive eclecticism, appear in connection with its titles and inscriptions: "The flesh of your sons and daughters" (AT, Leviticus 26:99) together with the mix of mythical creatures and scenes of cannibalism, as admonishing and at the same time humorous visions of the socio-critically motivated artist.

MAGDALENA KITA

(b. 1983 in Debica, PL, lives and works in Cologne, DE)

EDUCATION

- 2006 – 2010 Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, DE
Graduated as a Master Student, Meisterschülerin, Rita McBride
- 2006 – 2012 Co-founder / collaboration with ‚Congress‘
- 2005 – 2006 Socrates Erasmus, Kunsthochschule Cassel
- 2003 – 2005 Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków

GRANTS & AWARDS

- 2017 Los Angeles project grant, MFKJKS NRW, DE
Residency, SUPERDEALS, Brussels, BE
- 2016 Van Bommel Van Dam Prize 2016, Venlo, NL
Brussels / Athens project grant, MFKJKS NRW, DE
Setareh Future Masters Award, DE
Project funding, Kunststiftung NRW, DE
- 2015 Project funding, Kunststiftung NRW, DE
- 2014 Los Angeles project grant, MFKJKS NRW, DE
- 2010 Nam June Paik National Award, DE
Rölfspartner Artist Scholarship, DE
- 2005 Socrates Erasmus Prize, DE

SOLO SHOWS (selection)

- 2018 ABSOLUT VANILLA, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE
Syndicate at Material Art Fair, Mexico City, MX
- 2017 Performance, Museum Van Bommel Van Dam, Venlo, NL
Californication launch event, WIELS, Brussels, BE
The flesh of your sons and daughters, SUPERDEALS, Brussels, BE
- 2016 Office Hour, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, US
Fucking on Business, Prince of Wales, Munich, DE
Bruce Haines Mayfair (nee Ancient and Modern), London, UK
- 2015 Performance, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, US
- 2014 Parental Advisory Explicit Content, KARAT, Cologne, DE
I'm M-pire (w/ Theresa Reusch), KARAT, Cologne, DE
In Heaven Everything Is Fine, Jagla Ausstellungsraum, Cologne, DE
- 2013 Magdalena Kita at Germaniastraße (w/ Riccardo Paratore), Dusseldorf, DE
- 2011 Performance, Kulturabend, Bischoff Projects, Frankfurt/ Main, DE

SETAREH GALLERY

GROUP SHOW (selection)

- 2018 Girls 3000, Martinezz, Cologne, DE
Serious Fraud Office, a collaboration between Syndicate (Köln) and Mauve (Vienna), Mexico City, MX
- 2017 If the body is a temple..., Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, RU
Feminismus 3.0, Galerie Gisela Clement, Bonn, DE (curated by Noemi Smolik)
In-Situ, Drop City, Dusseldorf, DE
Warming Up, Petra Rinck Galerie, Dusseldorf, DE (organized by Drop City)
BRIDGE STRIKE!, Syndicate at Snehta, Athens, GR
- 2016 micro celebrities 2, Just Married, Brussels, BE
RM Basics: Human Needs, Reflektor M, Munich, DE
Van Bommel Van Dam Prijs, Museum Van Bommel Van Dam, Venlo, NL
Our Masters, Egyptian Art and Antiques, Los Angeles, US
Tastin' Waters, Priska Pasquer, Cologne, DE
Genius Loci IV: The Kicking Figure, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE
Transmission: Round Two, Studio for Subjective Experiences, Essen, DE
Ein Stärker Ort, H SR, Dusseldorf, DE
- 2015 Tiny Masters, Egyptian Art and Antiques, Los Angeles, US
COFA Contemporary, Jagla Ausstellungsraum, Cologne, DE
The ancient and modern doom of the eagle, Adler, Dusseldorf, DE
Californication, Konteksty 5 / In Situ, Sokolowsko, PL
The Price of Wisdom is Above Rubies, Ebertplatz, Cologne, DE
ego trinity, Calwer Passage / Temporary Concept Mall, Stuttgart, DE
- 2014 Männer und Frauen, Jagla Ausstellungsraum, Cologne, DE
Urban Heros, Ihsan Alisan Projects, Hagen, DE
Nose Art (after Post-intellectualism), Cologne, DE
Pleasures, Mega-Gay-World, Cologne, DE
Deconstructing Dysfunktion, Studio for Artistic Research, Dusseldorf, DE
- 2013 TAUSEND, Sechzigstraße 13a, Cologne, DE
Body Light, Venus & Apoll (Julia Stoschek Foundation), Dusseldorf, DE
Stelldichein, Kirschenpflücker at Bruch & Dallas, Cologne, DE
- 2012 Nam June Paik Award, Kunstmuseum Bochum, Bochum, DE
W1111, Transmission, Dusseldorf, DE
Herzlich Gefickt!, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, DE
- 2011 The Postcard, Rosenberg Gallery, New York, US
SingleMuseum, Kunstraum, Dusseldorf, DE
Scheiße, Single Club, Dusseldorf, DE
Sunbeam in the Glasshouse, 701 e.V, Dusseldorf, DE
Plastische Positionen im Jetzt, Galerie Warhus Rittershaus, Cologne, DE
Rölfspartner Kunsttag, KIT – Kunst im Tunnel, Dusseldorf, DE
- 2010 SMOG Performance Festival, Centrum Kultury, Katowice, PL
BERLIN, Galerie Warhus Rittershaus, Berlin, DE
Hardcore Intellectual, Plan 10, Chelsea Hotel, Cologne, DE
Congress illuminates, B1 / A40, Markus Ambach Projekte, DE

SETAREH GALLERY

- Bergische Kunstausstellung, Museum Baden / Solingen, DE
Orphée aux enfers, Künstlerverein Malkasten, Dusseldorf, DE
Morality in Europe today, KIT – Kunst im Tunnel, Dusseldorf, DE
Wrong, KIT – Kunst im Tunnel, Dusseldorf, DE
2009 Armela Show, Kunsthaus Erfurt, Erfurt, DE
Wir sehen uns morgen wieder, Forum Freies Theater, Dusseldorf, DE
Rites de Passage, Schunck Glas Palais, Heerlen, NL
Zwei Kerzen leuchten, Zeche Zollverein, Essen, DE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2018 ABBSOLUT VANILLA, exhibition publication, Setareh Gallery, Düsseldorf
if the body is a temple..., KubaParis online magazine, January
2017 Kliemann, Thomas. 'Feminismus 3.0', General Anzeiger (Bonn), November
Californication book launch at WIELS, KubaParis online magazine, June
2016 Magdalena Kita: Californication, Cologne (edited by JL Murtaugh)
RM Basics: Human Needs, edited by Maria Ines Plaza, Reflektor M, München
'Van Bommel Van Dam Prize', Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 21 October
Van Bommel Van Dam Prijs Catalogue, Museum VBVD, Venlo, NL
Magdalena Kita's 'Office Hour', KubaParis online magazine, August
Artist of the Week, Wertical online magazine, 6 April
Licht, Matthew. 'Fur-O-Glyphs', Bruce Haines Mayfair
2014 Kuhn, Thomas W. 'Magdalena Kita's Californication'
Mir, Emmanuel. 'Porn in the City', Perisphere, 22 March
2012 Könches, Barbara. Nam June Paik Award, catalogue, Kunstmuseum Bochum
2011 Shapiro, Alan N. 'Morality in Europe Today', Blog, 5 February
Sunbeam in the Glasshouse, catalogue, Dusseldorf
2010 Sonna, Birgit. 'Art Plus: Extraheft zur Quadriennale Dusseldorf'
Peters, Gertrud. 64. Bergische Kunstausstellung, Museum Baden, Solingen
Wrong Catalogue, KIT – Kunst im Tunnel, Dusseldorf, DE
2009 Ter Haar, Lene. Schunck / Rites de Passage, Heerlen, NL
2007 Bosetti, Annette. Rheinische Post, 23 August
Gehring, Arno and Eva Schmitt. Düsseldorf Express, 19 August

COLLECTIONS

- Museum van Bommel van Damme, Venlo, NL
Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann Collection, Aachen / Berlin, DE
Hildegard Collection, Berlin, DE