

Agata Sulikowska



Entangled Realities

19.7.-17.9.2022

Agata Sulikowska born in 1982 in Namyslow, Poland. Graduate of the Wladyslaw Strzeminski Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Lodz, Poland. In figurative paintings she shows people in all their, often confusing, states of life and emotions, with joys and sorrows, pride, fear, disappointments, and hope. Solemn, posed, coy, distressed, eager, obscene. In relationships with each other and isolated in juxtaposition. Her works confront with states of mind in times full of upheavals, confusing circumstances and uncertainty.

Reality, which can never be grasped as a whole anyway, seems to fragment into diverse realities that often cannot be mediated to each other or that shift into each other. Identity is fluid and always to be redefined.

Sulikowska draws from her own observations, stories, novels, old photographs as well as painted masterpieces. She combines history and stories. She condenses free fantasies, dream elements and reflections into sur-realistic compositions. Because there is no such thing as a single reality that can be grasped rationally and described unambiguously.

As an examination of ourselves and the worlds in which we live, she creates sur-realistic scenarios from her perceptions and sensations, traveling through time and space. Cherished explanatory categories become obsolete and imagined certainties erode.



AG18
GALLERY

Orgy in Kysten

2021

oil on canvas

145x200cm

8200 €



The painting is inspired by a series of the English painter William Hogarth from 1733-1735, "The career of a libertine", which depicts the decline of Tom Rakewell. Rakewell has inherited a fortune from his always miserly father after his death. In London, he begins a lavish life, squandering his wealth in brothels and gambling houses. He turns his world upside down and ends up in debtor's prison and then in an insane asylum. For Hogarth - as for Sulikowska - a parable about moral transgressions and insane notions of happiness.

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L'Amour est une Fête

2021

oil on canvas

190x145cm

190x50cm

190x50cm

10400€



The title for the painting is taken from Catherine Millet's 2001 book "L'Amour est une Fête" the scandalous autobiography of her wild sex life. With her painting Sulikowska takes up an illustration from the 19th century, which is emblematic of a dissolute sexual life. Connected to this is the question whether success and well-being in a life is primarily tied to the pursuit of sexual desire, horniness in all its variety and all its variations. Unlike in Millet's autobiography, in which the main character is a woman, desire in the painting is represented by a man. He rides up on a horse in front of a brothel in Canton, China (today's Guangzhou). Ready to live a life with no moral limits. Divided into four elements, the work symbolizes the fragmentation of life - people who create for themselves different roles, representations, personas and parallel worlds which can no longer be reconciled with each other. The illustration was published in 1868 and is now part of the Abecasis collection.

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L'Amour est une Fête

2021

oil on canvas

190x50cm

2100€



AG18
GALLERY

Northern Abattoirs
2021
oil, gold, petals on canvas
145x200cm
8200€



This painting is about our way of life. It's tied to the thoughtless consumption of meat on a massive scale. Consumers don't realize how much they themselves are damaging the environment. Consuming a lot of cheap meat is seen as a natural and happy form of prosperity and well-being. Sulikowska herself worked in a meat factory for several years. She is burdened by the knowledge of how much factory farming - as a prerequisite for mass meat consumption - pollutes the environment. And how we, with the illusion of doing us good, harm our health.

Hvor er Han
2021
oil on canvas
140x200cm
8200€



The picture depicts the painter Leon Prauziński. He sits on a horse and is surrounded by artists. The template for the painting is a photograph from Prauziński's student days. Prauziński looks confidently to the future and expects for himself a joyful and pleasurable life. The pictures he painted were destroyed by German soldiers when they started the war against Poland in 1939 and occupied the country. Prauziński was considered provocative and dangerous to them because he depicted the 1918-1919 Grand-polish Uprising in his works, expressing resistance and national pride. In November 1939, Prauziński was arrested by the Gestapo and murdered on January 6, 1940. Today, only reproductions of postcards from the interwar period exist of his works. He had made only 12 paintings based on drawings and sketches. The Norwegian title "Hvor er Han" means "Where is he?". Which here means, where is the almost forgotten Prauziński. The work of art points out how bold hopes - in the changing world - can turn out to be a bitter illusion.

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The Jews-Family Constellation

2020

oil on canvas

100x100cm

4400€



Again in this painting different stories and times slide into each other. It shows a traditional Jewish family at the end of the 19th century. The painting is based on a photograph by Edward Janusz, a well-known photographer in Poland at the time. A large part of his photo plates was rediscovered only in 1997 during restoration works. Dignified pose the members of the family. They seem to be at rest within themselves. Although some faces are strangely distorted. The blue tint gives them a sorrowful mood and refers to transience. In fact, almost all are dead - executed with shots in the head. The bullet holes can be seen on their foreheads. Sulikowska depicts their fall from the bourgeois world and the persecution of the Jews. Victims were also numerous members of her own family, who were murdered in Nazi camps.

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Witch sabbath
2019
acrylic on canvas
80x100cm
4400€



The work is inspired by a painting by Spanish artist Francisco Goya "The Devil's Lamp" from 1798. Goya's work shows Don Claudio, a man who believes he is bewitched and his life depends on keeping a lamp burning. Again, in Sulikowska's painting, different realities slide into each other: we see a man seduced (by the devil), spellbound by superstition, irrational ideas. Moonlight brightens the gloomy mood. Under the table lies a naked man, weary after a sexual encounter. But also already lustful again. The people at surrounding tables are random people of today. They are talking about witches and devils. Like Goya, Sulikowska thematizes the people's tendencies towards dark, irrational views and fears, in her view fueled by the Catholic Church. Sulikowska attests to its strong negative influence on society and politics - especially in Poland - with attitudes that are anti-Enlightenment and restrict personal freedom.

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Gambling
2019
oil on canvas
80x100cm
4400€



Here Sulikowska once again takes up - with reference to Goya - the witches and devils theme. It is about the influence of dark forces, about seductibility and irrational beliefs. Also about the question of how seductive gambling is, which awakens in us false hopes for happiness and might push us easily into emotional turmoil. In the lower left corner is the self-portrait of the artist and in the lower right corner is the portrait of a man who looks at us questioningly.

Allegory of Happiness

2019

acrylic on canvas

145x200cm

8200€



The painting shows the oldest bar in Athlone, Ireland, called "Sean's Bar". In the center of the painting is a young girl, the only child among adults who do not pay attention to her. It looks frightened and cries. It is not easy to be a child. It is not easy to become a grown-up. But the girl has an inner strength. She holds a glass with a blue snake coiled around it. The snake symbolizes immortality and health for Sulikowska. A reference to views in ancient Greece, where the snake symbolized science and wisdom. The staff of Asclepius, around which the snake coils, stands for medicine and the art of healing

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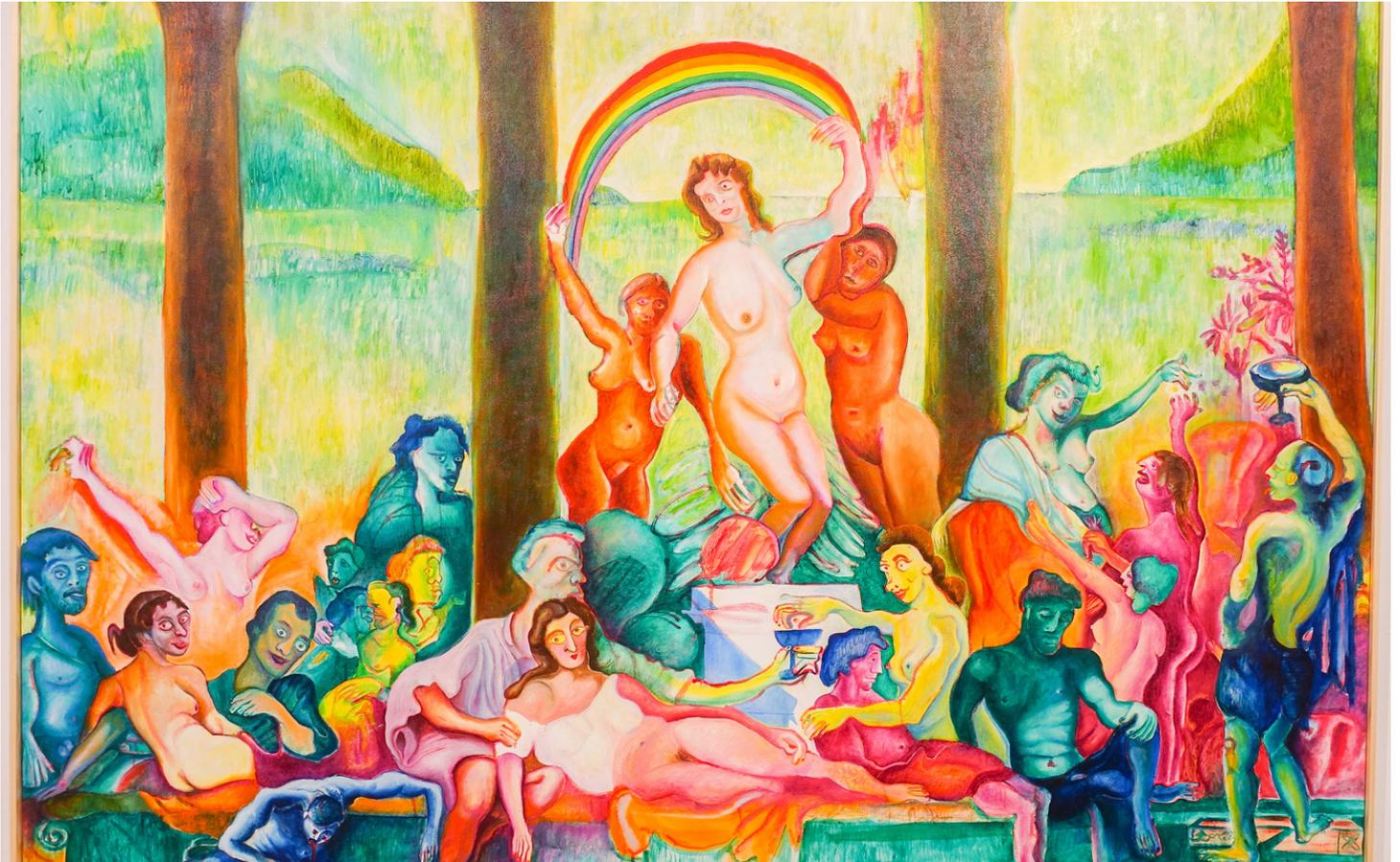
The Norwegians of the Decadence

2022

oil on canvas

145x200cm

8200€



This painting is based on the work of Thomas Couture "Les Romains de la Décadence" (1847), with which he depicts the decline of Roman society, holding up a mirror to the French monarchy and society of his time. Sulikowska transports the theme of decadence and liberation into the present. However, with her own twists. She asks about limits of permissiveness, shows affection for each other, but also instrumental reference to each other. Exuberance and joy, oblique irritation, as well as alcohol and drug abuse. At the center of her painting-symbol of permissiveness and free spirit is a woman (in Couture's work, a classicist statue of a man is at the center). The woman holds up a rainbow flag, the symbol of a community, the inclusion of LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual). It is the commitment to diversity and self-determination, to the free choice of one's own sexuality, the pride of personal and ever-changing identity. In the painting, LGBTQIs are all over the place. Like at a rainbow parade. Entangled Realities.

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Agata Sulikowska has so far kept her distance from the art market and the mainstream. Nevertheless, she has been discovered. In September she will be "artist in residence" at the renowned Mark Rothko Art Center, in Daugavpils/Latvia. In Norway she exhibits at the Harstadt and Tromso Art Forums, and in November she is featured at the Warsaw Art Fair. But first she can be seen with her exhibition "Entangled Realities" at AG18.



Exhibition: 19.7.-17.9.2022
AG18 Gallery
Annagasse 18, 1010 Vienna

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