

Olga Monina: Glücksfütterung

21 July - 04 August 2023

Curated by Amelie Wedel

Open by appointment: Email to cala@psfs2.info or PM to [cala.space](https://www.instagram.com/psfs2)

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The last few days, it has been raining. The air is cool, the ground wet, and the sweet smell of resin lies in the air. I wind my way past nettles, startle at the rustling in the undergrowth, and blow small spiders off me. I gather cones to remind myself of the forest later at my desk.

Recently, after a heavy storm, as I wandered through my favorite forest, the Sternwald, Olga's works came to my mind. For me, the woods and her figures share a certain quality: the ability to transport us to other times where personal and collective stories and layers intertwine.

My Sternwald has its characteristic features, its specific ecosystem, and material conditions. At the same time, it is a ‚topos‘, a commonplace and metaphor, like any forest, interwoven with stories and myths, a place of folklore and curiosities. On this metaphorical level, it runs the risk of being romanticized, as here, it becomes ahistorical and exists outside of time. However, there is also a world beyond the material (Sternwald) or the semiotic (topos), a world that is – from a human's perspective – displaced in time. Here, the forest does not fall *out of* time; instead, it invites us to fall *into its* time. This is how I feel when I remember how the woods have always been able to move my worries into other time scales, weaving them into a larger web.

In this forest, it is possible to encounter Olga's figures. Perhaps we would picnic together, share Borscht with each other, pass radishes back and forth, or tell each other recipe stories. Or maybe, we would be shy, just exchanging greetings and passing each other by. Like the forest, these creatures are also types: they seem both very old and living in different times, sometimes even in our present. Like the forest, they invite us into their world. And for a moment, we can shift between the past and the now. And like the forest, they feed us. This is what has always fascinated me about art and the forest: their generosity.

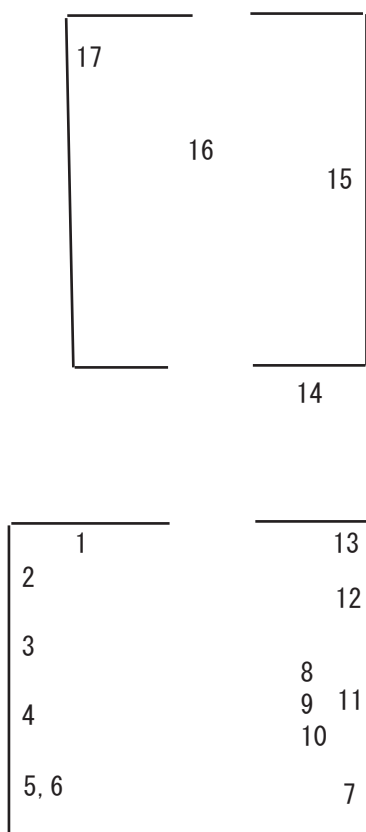
The exhibition gathers works by Olga Monina, which have been created over the past three years: clay figures fired in stoneware, ceramic dishes, watercolors, and paintings. Some of the drawings were produced from March to May at the Kunstverein Röderhof e.V. in rural Saxony-Anhalt. In the series *Rezeptgeschichten* (recipe story images) we see recipes, for example, where animals are stuffed with other animals. The work *Borscht* depicts the ingredients of the soup

originally from Ukraine, with green, red, white, cold, and warm variations from Poland, Belarus, and Russia. The painting *Vorschmack* shows the ingredients of the dish of the same name, which originated in the German-speaking and was brought to Eastern Europe by Ashkenazi Jews. Culinary traditions, history, and language migrate and grow and thus are part of ever changing transformations.

Other drawings portray animal sculptures, ‚Glücksgefäße‘ (lucky vessels), ‚Schweinekannen‘ (pig jugs), and ceramic dishes, forming the drawn, contemplative counterpart to the sculptures in the adjacent room. Some of these watercolours and drawings can be seen as fleetingly noted thoughts, as if they are excerpts from a larger narrative that has not yet been finished. Their presence is surprising; precisely because they manage to remain provisional, they seem to have been there forever. Thus, the image formats and subject matters are somehow shy and resistant at the same time – what a beautiful combination!

A video animation shows the images captured by a wildlife camera, in which a mouse lured with nuts and seeds climbs around a sculpture specially designed for it in the cellar of the Kunstverein Röderhof. Olga Monina's practice also includes hosting performative dinners, during which the animal sculptures are put to use, and a painting inspired by the full moon image of the Georgian painter Niko Pirosmani provides the atmospheric background. Consequently, on the day before the exhibition opening, we had wine from animal vessels, and ate from ceramic dishes: we had dough-wrapped tomatoes and clay-braised plums, potatoes, and eggs. We nibbled on pears and cracked walnuts. The sculptures were thus utilized, which prevents them from becoming lifeless relics. Instead, they – and we – are part of an arrangement where we observe each other, offer delicious food, and demand to be careful with one another, while leaving behind a festively ravaged still life.

Translated from German text by Amelie Wedel



1,7,8,9,10,11

Rezeptgeschichtsbilder

2023

Watercolour, coloured pencils
on paper

2

Борщ [Borscht]

2023

Watercolour, collage on paper

3+13

Rezeptgeschichtsbilder

Clay on charred wooden boards

4,5,6,7,12

Rezeptgeschichtsbilder

2022

Watercolour, coloured pencils
on paper

14

*Glücksfütterung (Monument for
a mouse)*

2023

HD Video on charred wooden
frame, 3:01 min

15

Vorsmack

2023

Oil and acrylic on cotton
120 x 110 cm

16

Große Glücksfütterung

2021 - 2023

Various vessels, animal cups,
pig jugs, stoneware, food
remains

17

o.T. (after N.Pirosmani)

2022

Acrylic on polyester

Olga Monina was born in Kharkiv, Ukraine, and currently lives and works in Berlin. She studied painting and graphics at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig and Fine Arts at the Sint Lucas School of Art in Brussels. Her works have been exhibited at various venues, including the Kunstverein Röderhof, *Über Brücken – Bridging Cologne*, a performance and exhibition project in public space in Cologne, the Neue Barmbeker Apotheke in Hamburg, the Vitrine Bom Dia Elgarafi in Berlin, and the Skulpturenpark Neustadt in Leipzig. Olga Monina also participated in *Horror des Alltags #71*, a monthly radio show hosted by Wilhelm Klotzek on PiRadio Berlin, and organized readings, including one with *Die Chronik*, a collaborative publication project with Fid. Fischer. She has contributed to publications such as *Wetter Magazin*, *Domian*, *The Shop*, and has published with editizione multicolore.

Cala is a collectively run project space, a place for gathering, experimentation, exchange and learning from each other. It is run by a small group working in the fields of art, design and theory, committed to ecological and social practices. Our space is home to individual practices and collaborations and hosts events like exhibitions, film screenings and workshops.

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