

Denitsa Todorova

Image on the Edge of Matter
Solo Show

March 15 – May 19, 2024

Opening: March 15, Friday, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., in the presence of the author

Sarieva/Gallery, Plovdiv

40 Otets Paisiy Str, Plovdiv

Visiting hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 2 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

*“Not the spots of the snow leopard
but the white between the spots.*

*While the sleeping animal quivers like hot air in front of the rock,
the dream disengages from the sleeper*

*and speeds like a blizzard over the plain,
leaving paw prints stamped in snow...”¹*

Peter Verhelst

Sarieva Gallery, Plovdiv presents the solo show Image on the Edge of Matter by Antwerp based Bulgarian artist Denitsa Todorova. Born in 1984 in Plovdiv, she received her education and pursued her creative path in Belgium. The exhibition includes her specific works on paper which attracted the attention of the professional community and won the author numerous awards.

Her delicate monochrome works produce astonishment with their emotional charge that forestalls the perception of the image itself. It is generated in the almost performative process of their creation – a process where precision and play coexist in symbiosis just as seduction and rejection would. The author initially places a thin sheet of paper on the floor of her studio, completely covers the surface with a layer of graphite powder and proceeds to remove and erase the dark pigment, in order to create a drawing and a composition in different layers. The creative process is extremely energetic, pedantic and continuous. Just as Philippe Van Cauteren observes – the technique is not “graphite on paper” but rather “graphite and paper”. An elemental power is generated from the interaction between the fragile and thin paper, the ethereal pigment and the sharp instruments used for the removal of the dark surface. The breach and removal are reminiscent of sgraffito – a technique for creating monumental murals in public spaces widely known in Eastern Europe during the middle of the last century. Denitsa mentions that in order to make such a drawing, she sometimes prepares not one, but three sheets of paper and blackens them with pigment.

“This is my playground: by giving myself three chances, I have more space to express myself and experiment. There is room for mistakes. Only the best drawing will be shown.”

The author draws inspiration from everyday phenomena, textures, forms and models like water surfaces, reflections, marble structures and firework blasts. These are frivolous effects rather than static scenes. Random, seemingly meaningless details that nonetheless constitute the fabric of reality. Pieter Vermeulen calls them „the noise of materiality“ and adds: „It is often these little things that grant the world its unmistakable character: the crackling of a vinyl record, the throatiness of a voice, the grain of a

¹ Част от поемата на Петер Верхелст за творчеството на Деница Тодорова

photograph." In this sense, although formally possessing such distinguishing marks, Denitsa Todorova's work does not strike as "abstract" in the literal sense of the term. Her hypersensitivity recalls familiar images, the soft outlines symbolize nature and landscapes, on the surface emerge barely perceptible brightly colored spots which the author self-ironically defines as candy.

The works in Denitsa Todorova's exhibition *Image on the Edge of Matter* shown in Sarieva/Gallery, Plovdiv are pre-linguistic and take us back to that innocent moment of thought and will formation when they are still blurred, emotional impressions and spots within a network of infinity. Scribbled and scarred like life itself.

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Denitsa Todorova was born in 1984 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. She lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium. She studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp, Master in Painting and the New Bulgarian University Sofia, Bulgaria, Bachelor of Stage Design.

She has numerous institutional exhibitions and participations among which: Grand Prize for Drawing Ernest Albert in De Garage Mechelen, Belgium, 2023; Maart Kunstroute Be-Part Waregem, Belgium, 2023; National Autumn Exhibitions, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 2023; Art Biennial Kunst&Zwalm, Belgium, 2023; Cultural Center Ronse, Belgium, 2014, 2015 and 2024; Strabag Kunstforum, 2019; STRABAG Art Foundation, Vienna, 2017; Design Museum Brussels, 2016; Museum M Leuven, 2015. She had a large number of solo and group shows in galleries in Belgium and the Netherlands including: Ballroom Gallery Brussels, DMW Gallery Antwerp, Whitehouse Gallery Leuven, Josilda da Conceicao Gallery Amsterdam. Her works was exhibited at the art fairs: Art Rotterdam, 2024, 2021, 2020, 2018, Art on Paper, Brussels, 2019.

For her work Denitsa was awarded with: Prize from STRABAG Art Award International, 2017 and the Drawing Prize Ronse, 2014 and 2015. She has also been nominated for multiple awards and honors, including the FID drawing prize Paris in 2017 and the Art Contest Brussels in 2016.

In 2021 by Stockmans Art Books was published her monograph "Phosphenes (seeing stars)". The catalogue includes texts by Philippe Van Cauteren, Pieter Vermeulen, Eric Min and poems Peter Verhelst. The catalogue was presented with artist talk with Philippe Van Cauteren, artistic director of SMAK Museum of Contemporary Art, Ghent, Belgium.

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