

Daria Melnikova

Date Night

February 7 - March 13, 2020

Opening of the exhibition 6 pm, February 6, 2020

Latvian artist Daria Melnikova's solo exhibition 'Date Night' is set as a café in which the author's drawings, collages, sculptures and objects from various periods act as the coffee shop's inventory and decorative elements. In Melnikova's work, references to the different motifs, techniques, materials and pastiches of different historical art styles that can be found in furnishing departments and hardware stores as well as interiors of corporate and private spaces speak about the eclecticism of today's "post-everything" state, the intertwining of art and leisure, and the ability to make art while doing something else. In this exhibition, the café becomes a situation in which previously created works of the author only exhibited once take on a new role and are newly presented to the visitors. Besides that, the exhibition ironically comments on the popular image of an "art café" and the cliché elements that create the atmosphere of such places.

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In 1734 Johann Sebastian Bach created a comic opera called 'Be Still, Stop Chattering', better known as the 'Coffee Cantata', commissioned by the Zimmermann Coffee House in Leipzig. The Coffee House was a popular gathering place for the townspeople (all men), also serving as the headquarters of the Collegium Musicum ensemble led by Bach since 1729. The libretto tells the story of the main character, the coffee-worshipping Lizette, and her father Schlendrian, intending to deter his daughter from this habit by trying to find her a groom. The neurotic drama, naturally, ends happily for everyone. The piece was usually performed by coffee-overfilled performers and enjoyed by a no less coffee-loving audience.

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Cafés played a crucial role in the life of surrealists. The leader of the movement, André Breton, often used portraits of his fellow surrealists and photographs of their works, the strangest historical artefacts, and the places they visited - hotels, wineries, bars and cafés - to illustrate his books. In Breton's book 'Nadja', pictures of the surrealists' beloved cafés are presented with no visitors, the tables set outside but the doors closed. This impression of monumentality and cold non-hospitality shows that already back then, Breton saw these places from a future perspective - as scenes of marvellous adventures creating a unique story. Hence, anyone who did not

participate in these adventures was considered an eternal outsider. Nowadays, these cafés have become centres of tourist attraction, with people from all over the world to coming experience the spirit of the past while enjoying a cup of coffee.

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Daria Melnikova's exhibition 'Date Night' is an escapist art deco café that offers a brief break away from current issues in an improvised sensory journey through different forms, colors and motifs.

Daria Melnikova (b. 1984) lives and works in Riga. She has held solo shows at Karlin Studios in Prague (2019), PLATO in Ostrava (2019), Kulturfolger in Zurich (2018), Kim? in Riga (2017, 2014, 2011), ISSMAG gallery in Moscow (2017) and Vita Kuben in Umeo (2014), and has participated in group shows at KHB in Bratislava (2019), Kiasma in Helsinki (2018), Rupert in Vilnius (2018), Silberkuppe in Berlin (2017), Art in General in New York (2015), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow (2014) and others. Daria's work forms part of the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma collection.

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Thank you