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SONJA RYCHKOVA (DE)

21/04/2024 – 29/06/2024

SONJA RYCHKOVA (B. 1998 IN DARMSTADT, DE) PRESENTS HER FIRST EXHIBITION *SMILE NOW CRY LATER* AT R;68.

AS AN ARTIST WHOSE FAMILY IMMIGRATED FROM RUSSIA INTO A SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBORHOOD OF GERMANY, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS “GHETTO,” RYCHKOVA’S WORK DRAWS ON AND BACK TO EXPERIENCES OF HER OWN AND OF HER PEERS. HER COMPLEX ILLUSTRATIONS OFFER A DEEPER MEANING TO “GHETTOS,” BEYOND ONE OF “LESS THAN” NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT AS A PLACE MANY PEOPLE CALL HOME AND OWN, SUCH AS RYCHKOVA ONCE DID. HER ART THUS COMES TO LIFE AS INSPIRED BY HER SHARED EXPERIENCES OF MIGRANT HYBRIDITY, MARGINAL SOCIAL POSITIONALITY, AND THE SEARCH FOR PLACE, SPACE, AND ESSENTIAL IDENTITY.

*SMILE NOW CRY LATER* CHALLENGES AND TRANSCENDS BORDERS AND BARRIERS—GEOGRAPHICALLY AND METAPHYSICALLY. THIS SERIES TELLS STORIES OF HER RECENT VISIT TO LOS ANGELES, A HOME TO BARRIO (MEXICAN-AMERICAN GHETTO) CULTURE, CHICANO CULTURE, AND MONTEBELLO PARK. THESE PAINTINGS INVITE THE VIEWER TO SIT ALONGSIDE RYCHKOVA, AS SHE VISITS MONTEBELLO PARK AND WHITTIER BLVD ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

THE SERIES CELEBRATES THE DIVERSITY AND COUNTERCULTURES INTRODUCED BY THE BARRIO, CHICANO, AND LOWRIDER (AN ICONIC BARRIO SYMBOL). HERE, RYCHKOVA BRINGS TO LIFE THE PRIDE AND CULTURE SHE WITNESSED OVER HER JOURNEY, AND WHICH SHE CONTINUES TO EXPLORE. NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH APPROPRIATION OR GENTRIFICATION, RYCHKOVA’S *SMILE NOW CRY LATER* TRULY DEMONSTRATES THE ARTIST PAINTING WHAT SHE SEES AND THE ABILITY TO BRING VISIONS TO LIFE THROUGH A CANVAS—REMINISCENT OF CRUZ, THE MEMORABLE TALENTED CHICANO ARTIST IN TAYLOR HACKFORD’S 1993 FILM, *BLOOD IN BLOOD OUT*.

OPENING RECEPTION 20/04/2024 6–8PM

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