

**Γ;68**



**SONJA RYCHKOVA**  
*SMILE NOW CRY LATER*

**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. Thus, themes of social positionality and immigrant experiences are ever pertinent in her work. To understand the complex images which she here illustrates, one must understand “ghettos” beyond the common stereotype which majority in-groups define as “less than,” but as a place some people call home and own as their own, such as Rychkova once did. Her art thus comes to life as inspired by her shared experiences of hybridity and marginalization.

The Chicano experience, Lowrider vehicles, and the historical and ideological presence of barrios (Mexican American ghettos) are foundational to this series. Historically inhabited by the socioeconomically underprivileged, segregated from Anglo neighborhoods, barrios are most importantly a home of essence. To this day, less-than-ideal living conditions and circumstances for barrio inhabitants have yielded a need for a sense of prominence. This is where different formations of identity, cultural expressions, and traditions, including lowriding, begin within the Mexican-American borderlands.

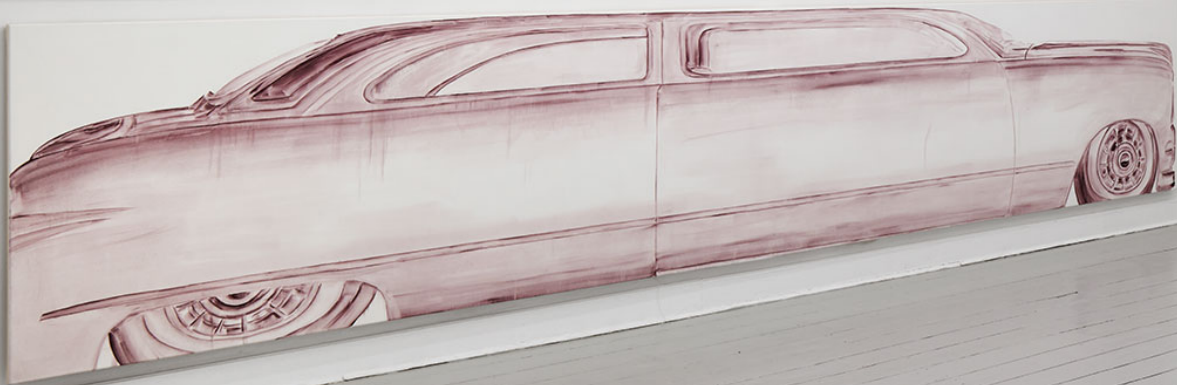
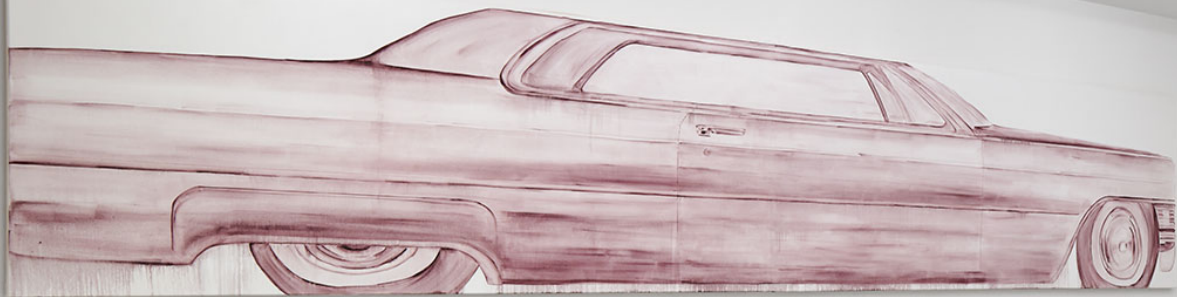
*Smile Now Cry Later* challenges and transcends borders and barriers—geographically and metaphysically. This new series tells stories of her recent visit to Los Angeles, a home to barrio culture, Chicano culture, and Montebello Park, an iconic land wherein the scenes of many of these paintings take place. These paintings invite the viewer to sit alongside Rychkova, as she visits Montebello Park and Whittier Blvd on a Sunday afternoon:

The people [and families] were so welcoming and warm. . . street was packed with lowriders, people waving the Mexican flag from the window, [vehicles] jumping while driving and taking their space in a very proud way. . . Lowriders are art . . . personal expression[s] of pride and rebellion. They unite people and strengthen the community for people from all different types of backgrounds. (Sonja Rychkova)

*Smile Now Cry Later* celebrates the diversity and countercultures introduced by the barrio, Chicano, and lowrider. As the works show, posing plays a significant role in perception of the low and slow identity and lifestyle. Here, Rychkova brings to life the pride and culture she witnessed over her journey, and which she continues to explore. Finally, not to be confused with appropriation or gentrification, which we so often now see, in this series, Sonja truly paints what she sees and brings her visions to the viewer, reminiscent of Cruz Cande, the memorable talented Chicano artist and Vatos Locos member in Taylor Hackford’s 1993 Film, *Blood in Blood Out*.

Francisco Ortega





# R;68

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**Sonja Rychkova**  
**1951 Ford**

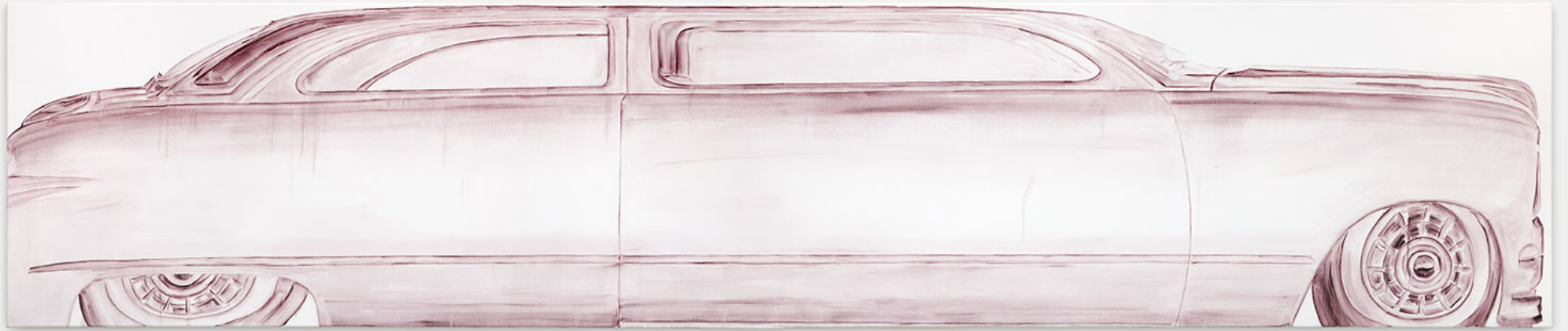
2024

oil on canvas

100 x 480 cm, 39 3/8 x 189 in

unique

SjR/M 7



# **R;68**

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**Sonja Rychkova  
1965 Cadillac DeVille**

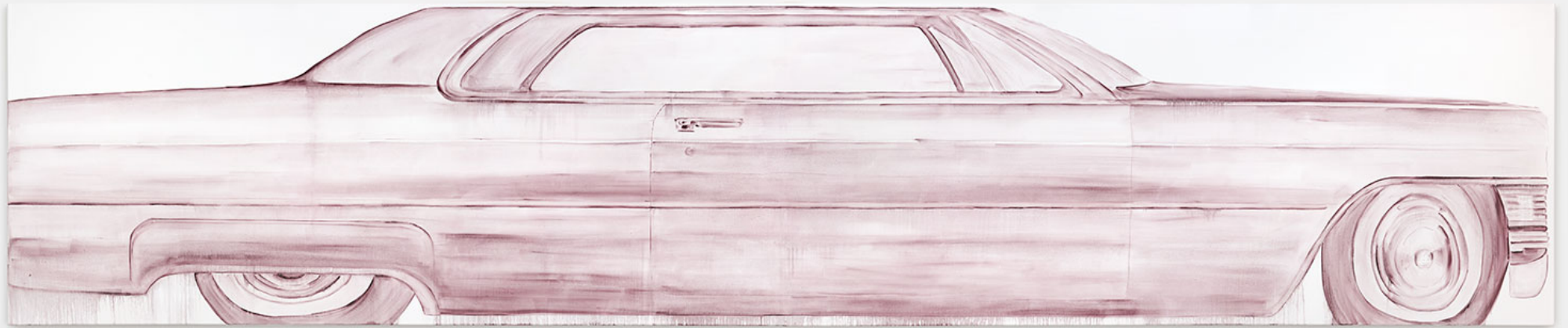
2024

oil on canvas

100 x 480 cm, 39 3/8 x 189 in

unique

SjR/M 9





# **R;68**

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**Sonja Rychkova**  
**Chevy Bomb**

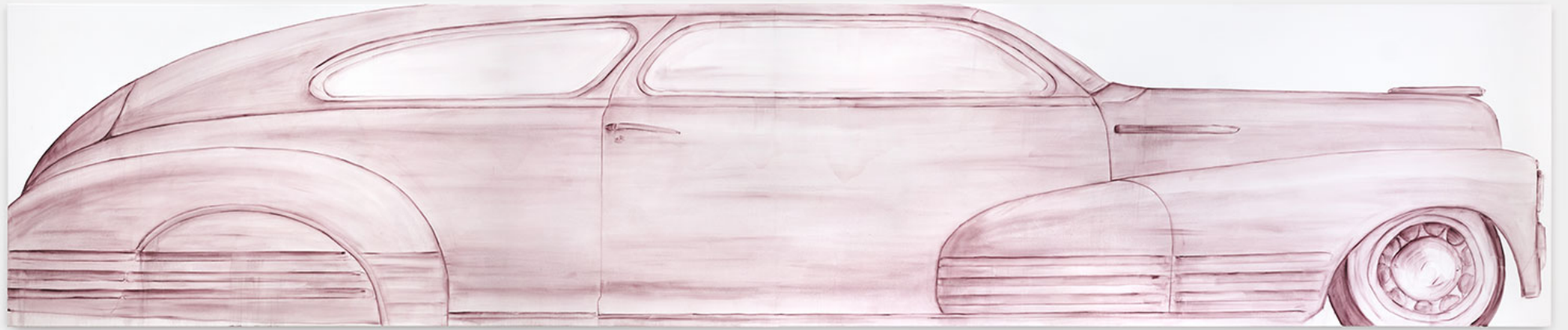
2024

oil on canvas

100 x 480 cm, 39 3/8 x 189 in

unique

SjR/M 8



# F;68

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contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova**  
**2909 Supply Ave**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 6



# R;68

*For further information please  
contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova  
Horchata**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 2





# R;68

*For further information please  
contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova  
Jerry Montebello Park**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 1



# F;68

*For further information please  
contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova**  
**Chemo Montebello Park**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 4





# R;68

*For further information please  
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**Sonja Rychkova**  
**Chemo Montobello Park 2**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 12





# r;68

*For further information please  
contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova**  
**Olvera Street**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 5



# R;68

*For further information please  
contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova**  
**Target Whittier Blvd**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 3



# r;68

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contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova**  
**ritmo1**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 11



# r;68

*For further information please  
contact: [info@ruttkowski68.com](mailto:info@ruttkowski68.com)*

**Sonja Rychkova**  
**ritmo2**

2024

oil on canvas

220 x 90 cm, 86 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

unique

SjR/M 10







**R;68**

BISMARCKSTRASSE 68  
50672 COLOGNE

**OPENING HOURS**  
SATURDAY – SUNDAY 2 – 7 PM

**EXHIBITION DURATION**  
20/04/24 – 29/06/24

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