



Artist: Shalva Nikvashvili

Exhibition title: Tza

Venue: 47m Contemporary, Leipzig

Date: June 2 – August 25, 2024

About 47m Contemporary

47m Contemporary is a Kunstverein dedicated to the exhibition and mediation of international contemporary art founded in 2024 and situated in the center of Leipzig. With a focus on media art, sculpture, installation, performance and conceptual art, as well as an interdisciplinary approach, its profile corresponds to a place of international dialogue, exchange and diversity. Three annual exhibitions are complemented by a program of lectures, readings, symposia, video screenings, and publications.

Exhibition text

The fact that day by day, we are performers of our own lives is one of the basic ideas behind Shalva Nikvashvili's artistic work. His multimedia creations explore questions of identity, beauty, and trauma. Through his photographs, videos, and sculptures, he develops various gender-fluid characters, drawing from close observations and artistic negotiations of social norms. In the resulting illusion of a society, the grotesque as well as discomfort, irritation and provocation become a means of pushing viewers to the limits of their experience and formulate conditions for new realities.

With its own inaugural exhibition ‚Tza‘, the Kunstverein 47m Contemporary presents the artist's first solo exhibition. The exhibition creates a world far from normality in which we all live our own illusion. Referring to this assumption, the exhibition title ‚Tza‘ (‘ტა’) comes from the Georgian expression for ‚Sky‘, which is the only constant truth in a reality full of lies. The artworks can therefore be viewed in relation to one another, telling a story in their entirety. The first part of the exhibition on the first floor of the Kunstverein is conceived as a life-size diorama that can be experienced from two different perspectives: from a walking perspective through the installation, as well as from the elevated viewpoint of the gallery of the exhibition space.

Nikvashvili's works are often based on subjective experiences of strangeness as a queer, migrant person in conservative environments. The exhibition features sculptures, photographs, and videos depicting bizarre hybrid creatures with sexual characteristics of both women and men, and sometimes even animals, challenging stereotypical images of bodies. Although Nikvashvili's figures are mostly presented with explicit genitalia, they are not presented in a sexualized context, freeing them from masculine, heteronormative perspectives, shame and taboo, and transforming them into expressions of self-empowerment and liberation.

Shalva Nikvashvili (*1990 in Signaghi, Georgia) was born into a conservative Christian family. He started studying fashion at the Georgian Academy of Arts in 2010. After coming out in 2013, he fled to Belgium, where he studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp and experienced sexual and psychological

abuse in his first marriage. Looking back, he describes this period as the darkest episode of his life. Bored with the art world and chastened by immigration policy, he now lives and works in the German countryside with his four dogs and his husband. He works successfully as a costume designer for leading theatres, including Vienna's Burgtheater, Hamburg's Thalia Theater and the Bavarian State Opera.

The exhibition was curated by Janika Jähnisch and Erik Swars

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