

*The Unicorn Surrenders to the Maiden Cartoon*

Sam Keogh

01/11 – 14/12/24

Atletika, Vilnius

Curated by David Dale Gallery, Glasgow

*The Unicorn Surrenders to the Maiden Cartoon* is an installation of collage, sculpture and performance by Sam Keogh which critically engages depictions of pre-modern Europe in both tapestries and mass media genre fantasy. The work draws on *The Unicorn Surrenders To A Maiden*, a badly damaged 16th Century Flemish tapestry that survives today in two fragments and hangs in the Met Cloisters as part of a famous series of tapestries known as *The Hunt of the Unicorn*.

At the time of the French Revolution, the original tapestries were owned by members of the French Nobility – the House of Rochefoucauld. Such artifacts were often destroyed or expropriated in acts of iconoclasm against the Ancient Régime, which is likely why only fragments of the tapestry remain. The surviving remnants are pockmarked by areas of damage and repair, forming a material index of revolutionary events, each one a fraying, tearing, and patching up of Europe's historical narrative.

In *The Unicorn Surrenders to the Maiden Cartoon*, the fantastic scenes depicted in the tapestry is re-made as a 'cartoon', or 1:1 scale working drawing made for the production of a tapestry. Here, the rarefied hortus conclusus of the Unicorn is invaded by monstrous entities. Their forms are a Frankensteined combination of limbs, heads, faces and personal effects from an array of sources. Some hands hold scissors or craft knives, suggesting that they have collaged themselves together before cutting and pasting themselves into the world of the tapestries, exploiting its sutured wounds as entry points. Limbs are multiplied and entangled, and faces are made up from folded, torn, and recomposed layers of background and foreground. It's difficult to tell where distinct bodies begin and end or whether they are destroying or building the world they inhabit.

At Atletika, Keogh will interact with this collage, folding and unfolding its elements to bring its characters into a semi improvised dialogue about an ekphrastic story by Samuel R. Delany; the myth of the abduction of Europa; and the history of the design of the EU flag.

Sam Keogh (1985, Wicklow, Ireland. Lives and works between Glasgow and Co. Wicklow, Ireland) works across sculpture, collage, video, installation and performance. His installations include intricately made sculpture and collage which often act as props, backdrops and visual scripts for performances. Taking the form of fractured monologues, the performances present characters who are pulled apart by their efforts to convey a theory, anecdote or historical event. Here, the work's physical, gestural and linguistic materials combine to create grubby cognitive maps of interconnecting themes as varied as masculinity, colonialism, science fiction and the politics of popular culture. Sam Keogh received an MFA from Goldsmiths, London in 2014 and completed the Rijksakademie residency in Amsterdam in 2017. His work has been exhibited at Primary, Nottingham; Goldsmiths CCA, London; Museo Madre, Naples; Centre Pompidou, Paris; 15th Lyon Biennial; The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin and Eva International, Limerick.

This exhibition has been organised by the Lithuanian Interdisciplinary Artists' Association together with David Dale Gallery. LIAA activities are supported by the Lithuanian Council for Culture and Vilnius City Municipality. The exhibition is supported by Creative Scotland, The Arts Council of Ireland, and Culture Ireland. The exhibition is part of David Dale Gallery's annual international exchange programme, and follows on from hosting an exhibition curated by the Lithuanian Interdisciplinary Artists' Association in 2023.