

GALERIE OSKAR WEISS

Victoria Colmegna
La Girl Guide Hut
14.06–19.07.2025

On the occasion of Zurich Art Weekend 2025, Galerie Oskar Weiss is delighted to announce a thrilling new exhibition by Argentinian artist, Victoria Colmegna.

La Girl Guide Hut takes its name from a Girl Guide's hut in rural Scotland used by psychoanalyst Melanie Klein during the 1940s as a consulting room for child patients. In this hut, Klein advanced her Play Technique, treating children's play as a direct expression of the unconscious. A child's psychic life was structured visually, Klein believed, rather than linguistically, as in adults. The "la" in *La Girl Guide Hut* is the Spanish definite article—"the"—artist Colmegna's first language. For her, there is only one Girl Guide hut: this mythic chamber, part psychoanalytical backstage, part childhood clubhouse. Both a site of early psychic decoding and a headquarters for would-be girl leaders aged 5-17.

Colmegna's installation of the same name consists of used dollhouses. She describes them as "depicting anonymous plots, decorative material decisions, and the cringe of the Other's touch. One could say, spying the child's unconscious." The exhibition spills outward from there: mountains of pink powder, a suite of watercolours, wall-based fabric assemblages with equine instruments, and gynecological tools. It is the merging of child's play, the operating room, and the gift shop.

In the watercolours, groups of identical, schizoid women populate scenes that feel both overly rehearsed and surreal: boarding schools in Switzerland, jacuzzis, tarot sessions, glasses of wine. They appear naked or pregnant, sometimes in German uniforms or crowns, often flanked by dogs. Certain backdrops repeat the pink powder, which we've already encountered in the exhibition space, like a déjà vu. The girl-women, too, repeat the same face; their empty expressions feel off—too staged—as if mimicking someone else's emotions.

One watercolour, *Kidnapped 1976*, departs from the schizoid women to portray an abduction in plain sight during Argentina's dictatorship.

The pink powder may allude to 2C-B, a psychoactive illicit substance. Known for its hallucinogenic and stimulant properties, 2C-B alters perception, collapses reality, and in higher doses, can trigger psychosis. A pop star and a model fell to their deaths in Buenos Aires while reportedly under its influence.

Early psychological theories suggested that twins raised together may struggle to differentiate themselves, to say "I" instead of "we." Some even pathologize twins as "monstrous," psychically fused and unable to individuate. But this doubled state is not limited to biological twins. The doctor-patient and artist-spectator relationships are also psychically entwined. In Colmegna's world, twinning is a way of life: doubling, tripling, endlessly splitting. The result is a kind of psychotic mirroring: projection as loss of self, and self as parody.

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A twin is always a proxy. And in tight spots, an alibi.

"The remnants of their last days together suggest that in some respects the twins lived out a kind of nightmarish children's party. There were dozens of bottles of sweet soda pop all over the place—wild cherry, strawberry, vanilla cream, Rooti root beer, Coca-Cola. There were cookies, cakes, and ice cream, too. And they never had to clean up."

– *Esquire*, *Dead Ringers: A bizarre case of the death of twins*, March 1, 1976

Colmegna's work fixates on what's lost: childhood, coherence, psychic stages. She steals mediums like outfits—painting, fashion, readymades, even pharmacology. Never staying still, her true medium may be relational fabric: the social theatre underlying a practice built on collaboration, commissions, and shared identity. She mirrors to stay schizoid, a moving target in search of her alibi. This adopting and dropping of personas makes up her *Personality Museum*, where multiplicity operates as a confusion tactic.

If a subject or body must be static to be examined, appraised, diagnosed, or operated on, then Colmegna's practice stages a refusal to be still. Her rabid movement across forms becomes a kind of fluid 'no'—a rejection of containment, legibility, and cure.

Zoom out, and we're all inside Colmegna's dollhouse.

– Bonny Poon / Conditions

