



Olga Balema: *Early Man*
April 15 – May 19, 2016

Swiss Institute is pleased to present the first institutional solo exhibition in the United States of Olga Balema. For *Early Man*, Balema has created a new series of works using maps and globes from a range of origins and periods, which she has variously painted on and affixed with cast latex breasts.

Using large expanses of color, Balema has painted over a number of large schoolroom style maps, which display population statistics, geographical borders and average temperatures. Predominately outdated, these highlight the limits of a cartographic impulse to capture a world constantly in flux. Picking out geographical areas based on shape and composition, washing over text and obscuring information, Balema renders these pedagogical, authoritative displays both messily fluid and obsolescent. The maps' lofty ambitions to objectively analyze the world are dragged towards the earthbound by the addition of lumpy breasts, which sag and protrude in tragicomic fashion. This pull towards the floor hints at a material exhaustion, suggesting that the historic personification of the Earth as a nurturing mother might be seen as something closer to a tired mom. Corporeal in presence, the works express altering states of fecundity and depletion.

Olga Balema: *Early Man* is the seventh exhibition in the *ONE FOR ALL* series at SI. Building on Swiss Institute's long history of providing a platform for emerging artists, each show will be the artist's first institutional solo exhibition in the United States, with a newly commissioned body of work specifically created for the exhibition space. Swiss Institute is grateful for support from the VIA Art Fund, Presenting Sponsor of the *ONE FOR ALL* series.

Olga Balema (b. 1984, Lviv, Ukraine) holds an MFA from University of California, Los Angeles and has had residencies at Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten / Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Recent exhibitions include: *I Am Still Alive - On the Materialities of Life*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2016); *One reenters the garden by becoming a vegetable*, Kunstverein Nürnberg, Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, Nuremberg (2015); *By the Bearer in whose Name it is Issued*, Center for Style, Melbourne (2015); *Function Follows Vision, Vision Follows Reality*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2015); *2015 Triennial: Surround Audience*, New Museum, New York (2015); *Puddle, pothole, portal*, SculptureCenter, New York (2014); and *Nature after Nature*, Fridericianum, Kassel (2014).

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List of Works

Clockwise from left on entrance:

Klima der Erde Climate of the Earth, 2016

Map, latex, pigment
58 x 88 x 3.5 inches

Globe, 2016

Globe, latex, pigment
38 x 24 x 20 inches

Imperialismus der Grossmächte und seine Folgen, 2016

Map, latex, pigment, acrylic paint
39 x 59 x 6 inches

Von der vorgeschichtlichen Zeit bis zum ende der Völkerwanderung, 2016

Map, latex, pigment, acrylic paint
39 x 63 x 5 inches

Our America Spread of Western Civilization, 2016

Map, latex, pigment
84 x 47 x 5 inches

All works courtesy the artist