

Veronika Hapchenko *False Door*

January 20th – February 26th 2022

Import Export

Aleje Ujazdowskie 22/3,

00-478 Warsaw

Import Export is excited to present “False Door” – a solo exhibition by Krakow-based, Kyiv-born artist Veronika Hapchenko.

Hapchenko recently graduated with an MFA in Painting from the Krakow Academy of Fine Art, after first studying stage design at the National University of Cinema and Television in Kyiv, Ukraine. Embracing both painting and object making, Hapchenko’s work is concerned with cultural tropes of the former USSR – as well as with the strong ties between esoteric beliefs, politics and militarism that they entail. Looking to philosophical theses, historiography and oral history in her work, the artist traces legends and taboos surrounding revolutionary artists, political figures and the presence of occult in their lives and output.

For her exhibition at Import Export, Hapchenko created a series of paintings and mixed-media objects thematising Cosmism. Originating in the esoteric futurism of Tsarist Russia, Cosmism was further developed in the early twentieth century by thinkers such as Nikolay Fyodorov and Konstantin Tsiolkovsky. The former argued that mortality likened humans to animals and that the next stage of human evolution would include immortality. The latter, a practising scientist and pioneer in cosmonautics, believed that immortality and a carefree human existence could be achieved through the colonisation of space. All the dead who ever lived on Earth would then be resurrected and exist alongside the living there.

Taking cues from the language of theatre, playing with scale and height, Hapchenko has rendered her version of Fyodorov’s and Tsiolkovsky’s cosmic future in “False Door”. Titled after the Egyptian architectural ornament believed to be the meeting point for the living and the dead, the exhibition juxtaposes

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portrayals of the cosmos with the elements of life on Earth. Large-scale figures of giants carrying celestial spheres materialise alongside portrayals of substances known to be found in the ancient sarcophagi (blood, milk and honey) and tombstones (one painted, one printed in miniscule 3D). Forgoing value judgements in favour of contemplating taboos and hidden meanings, Hapchenko ponders the relevance of the theory of immortality and Cosmism today.

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