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PAULINA OŁOWSKA
HAUS PROUD

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Paulina Olowka *Haus Proud*

November 4 – December 11, 2021

Paulina Olowka presents a new series of paintings and a video work in *Haus Proud*, the final exhibition at Metro Pictures before its permanent closure at the end of the year. Olowka considered the special context of the exhibition while producing the works. Informed by her research into women-run exhibition spaces and schools, such as the Women's School of Planning and Architecture in the United States and the Zakopianska Szkoła Koronarska ("Zakopane Bobbin Lace School") in Poland, the paintings adapt imagery from her ever-increasing collection of vintage fashion advertisements and photographs to continue her longstanding interest in expanding the representation of women in art history.

The portrait *Ester Krumbachová in her office* is an homage to the eponymous stage and costume designer, screenwriter, and director. Olowka is drawn to Krumbachová not only for her many contributions to Czech New Wave cinema but also for her influential position behind the scenes, a position typical of women whose labor has often gone underappreciated and unrecognized throughout history. Olowka paints Krumbachová standing in the middle of an office surrounded by posters for the films she worked on in the 1960s.



The School of Archery is one of two paintings based on images by American fashion photographer Deborah Turbeville. Reminiscent of Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, Olowka's painting shows a group of elegantly dressed women in bowler hats lounging in a field, their bows and arrows resting on the grass beside them. The title painting *Haus Proud* celebrates the professional technical schools of the Soviet Union, which provided specialized, non-academic vocational training across the Soviet republics. The sgraffito depicted on the wall behind the women alludes to the instruction these schools provided in a wide range of artistic mediums, including mosaics and mural painting.

Together, the paintings imagine a fantasy educational community starring fabulous renaissance women of all stripes—lecturers, students, custodial staff, and a principal with her pet. The video collage work foregrounds the historical basis of this narrative, featuring photographs and documentation from the women-run art schools and institutions that served as the artist's inspiration. These parallels form the artist's tribute to her longtime gallery Metro Pictures and the community it has established over its forty-year history.

Olowka's own practice includes sculpture, installation, and performance. It also extends to collaborative projects such as the Artist House Kadenówka, a grand 1930s mansion in a bucolic corner of rural Poland where Olowka hosts artist-led events and happenings. Since 2015 she has served as artistic director of *Pavilionesque*, a magazine dedicated to art and theater published by the Centre for Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor CRICOTEKA in Kraków, the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, the University of Geneva, and for the upcoming fourth issue the University of Zurich. (Olowka has taught at the latter three institutions.) Earlier this year she presented a newly commissioned performance titled *Grotesque Alphabet (After Roland Topor)* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. The Kitchen in New York premiered her ballet *Slavic Goddesses* in 2017, and it was subsequently performed at Milan's Museo del Novecento in 2018 and again at the 2020 Biennale Gherdëina in Italy. Her performance commission *Naughty Nymphs in the Courtyard of the Favorites* will debut at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2022.

She has had major one-person exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw. She received the prestigious Aachen Art Prize in 2014, with an associated exhibition at the Ludwig Forum for International Art in Aachen, Germany.

Image: *Esther Krumbachová in her office*, 2021. 86 5/8 x 63 inches (220 x 160 cm).

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School of Archery (after Deborah Turbeville), 2021

Oil on canvas

102 3/8 x 82 11/16 inches

260 x 210 cm

(MP# PO--213)

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Feminist Mycology (2021) with reference imagery of Deborah Turbeville and Cecilia Granata, *Sexy Mushrooms Tattoo Flash*, 2021

Acrylic and oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 131 7/8 inches

220 x 335 cm

(MP# PO--214)

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In Black with Roses on 24th, 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 55 1/8 inches

220 x 140 cm

(MP# PO--215)

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Artist's Flea Market, 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 131 7/8 inches

220 x 335 cm

(MP# PO--216)

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Haus Proud, 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 134 1/4 inches

220 x 341 cm

(MP# PO--217)

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Esther Krumbachová in her office, 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 63 inches

220 x 160 cm

(MP# PO--219)

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Principia and Her Pet, 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 63 inches

220 x 160 cm

(MP# PO--220)

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The Cleaners, 2021

Oil on canvas

78 3/4 x 55 1/8 inches

200 x 140 cm

(MP# PO--221)

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Hybrid (Visita interiora terrae rectificando invenies occultum lapidem), 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 59 1/16 inches

220 x 150 cm

(MP# PO--222)

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Agriculture Teacher, 2021

Oil on canvas

86 5/8 x 55 1/8 inches

220 x 140 cm

(MP# PO--223)