

KATYA GROKHOVSKY: PRIVATELY OWNED

Overnight Projects & The Karma Bird House Gallery • Burlington, VT • overnightprojects.com • June 27–July 27, 2019

Katya Grokhovskiy's practice, which combines performance, video and installation, rejects all social norms of domesticity and objectification. Whether time-based or three-dimensional, Grokhovskiy constructs artworks of visual defiance and relentless absurdity with costume, found furniture, paint, plaster and fabric.

In May, Grokhovskiy's interdisciplinary approach will animate the Karma Bird House Gallery in Burlington, VT. Presented by the curatorial initiative, Overnight Projects, *Privately Owned* will resemble a twisted domestic setting with, as the artist describes, "dysfunctional objects," including a deconstructed sofa-sculpture, *For Babushka*, comprised of burlap, wire and gloss varnish.

Grokhovskiy creates assemblages by papier-mâché, cutting, painting, and juxtaposing bric-a-brac—wigs, inflatables, an oversized teddy bear—to the point of faint recognition. In an earlier work, *Theater of the Mundane*—an installation activated by performance—her deconstructed figures recalled Isa Genzken's *Actors* series but

with an increased subversion and attack on the male gaze: Her sawed female mannequin parts sprawled and seemingly sprouted from the floor.



Katya Grokhovskiy, *Bad Woman*, 2017, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

For *Privately Owned*, Grokhovskiy anticipates an immersive, site-specific set: curtains, fashioned from old clothing and toys; a mattress, collaged from used garments, wire and fragments of discarded material. Like Sarah Sze, her work can, at first, appear disordered. Yet each of Grokhovskiy's

assemblages is thoughtfully crafted to examine issues of consumerism, gender and alienation.

Two of Grokhovskiy's videos, *Bad Cat* (2018) and *Bad Woman* (2017), will also be on display. For Grokhovskiy (who interned for luminaries Barbara Hammer and Martha Wilson), "bad woman" is one of her hallmark personas. In pink thigh highs, leopard fur and a disfigured, handmade bulbous nose mask, the artist's alter ego may strike some as grotesque. Shot in her parents' backyard in Australia, where Grokhovskiy initially emigrated from the Ukraine, *Bad Woman* was a primal response to the 2016 American election, a reclamation of the "nasty woman" moniker. "My gut reaction was to create this character and dump all of my feelings," says Grokhovskiy, who holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. *Bad Woman* finds Grokhovskiy with a plush parrot on her shoulder, assuming slapstick sexualized poses, balancing on a wooden chair. Yet surprisingly, she emerges more as an image of empowerment than satire.

—Jacoba Urist

PREVIEW: Vermont

FAULT LINES

Studio Place Arts • Barre, VT • studioplacearts.com • May 14–June 29, 2019

When entering the exhibit, *Fault Lines*, at Studio Place Arts Gallery, visitors are confronted by Tuyen My Nguyen's *Threadbarrier*, a half-transparent wall of earth-toned threads. Nguyen's piece is the perfect poster child for *Fault Lines*, which invited artists to explore the fractures at many levels in our contemporary world.

Clay hands reach through *Threadbarrier* to the opposite wall where the 16 tall figures of Susan Wilson's *Awakenings* hang. Wilson writes, *People are on the move... Seeking has hands... Reaching has arms... Hope has feet. A House Divided (Vestiges of the Reconstruction)* by Rob Millard-Mendez is a sculpture of a naked, athletic Uncle Sam wearing his signature top hat. He balances weakly on narrow ankles, atop a red-and-blue map of the United States, holding a drone in each hand.

Trumptych by Hannah Morris, is a series of three embroidery hoops with figures of Trump as the animating character, singing *I am a little teapot... Tip me over and pour me out*. Teresa

Celemin offers visitors an opportunity to participate in the *Manbaby Project* and includes an album of photographs of where the *Manbaby* stickers have been affixed.

Pria Cambio's *Dysfunctional Blanket* in red, white and blue strikes a more personal note.



Torin Porter, *Vive Ensemble*, 2018, steel, 3 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2". Photo courtesy of the artist.

Initiated after a loss, the five-sided shapes are imperfectly joined, including large gaps. Cambio likens this to the need for compromise, in both the private and public sphere.

Both Ann Young and Torin Porter offer work that attests to the importance of coming together. Young's painting, *Blood Brothers*, depicts three men of different faiths in an active, animated discussion. In *Vive Ensemble*, Porter presents a steel sculpture of seven figures facing inwards, forming a circular dome with heads joined at the center. Their closed circle could also simultaneously be excluding others. Conflict resolution depends on the common space of overlapping circles to produce common ground.

Fault Lines offers a varied and fascinating array of artistic responses to contemporary humanitarian and political dilemmas. This is a timely and provocative exhibit organized by one of the most consistently innovative galleries in Vermont.

—B. Amore