

Three elementary pillars of every person and every society are politics, religion and sexuality. Each of these pillars is an indicator of the openness of a society.

The freedom with which art is allowed to deal with controversial issues is at the same time the mirror of a state. The state which is particularly in focus in Da, Papa is Russia. Governed by Vladimir Putin, homosexuality is suppressed by law in the largest country in the world, PornHub is blocked and dating apps like Tinder pass on information to the secret services. In addition, since the end of the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church has regained a higher social status. The state promotes this significantly through legislation, which was drastically tightened especially after the rise of the "Pussy Riot" movement to protect the faith and the church.

One case that has divided the country since 2018 is the murder of their father by the Khachaturian sisters after years of abuse. For some an act of self-defence in a hopeless situation, for others a devious crime. With her "Khachaturian Madonna" Klimentyeva takes up this conflict.

Depicted in the pictorial language of a traditional icon with three hands, Mary carries the Khachaturian Sisters in her arms instead of Christ, in the other two hands she holds a hammer and knife. This controversial work symbolizes on the one hand the powerlessness and inability of the mother to protect her own children, and on the other hand the sisters' elevation from parts of society to icons of feminine self-determination.

Another main work of the exhibition is a second icon, the Corona Madonna. Created during the protective measures against the COVID-19 virus, it is on the one hand an allusion to the attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church to fight the virus with prayers, holy water and relics, and on the other hand the Madonna is a contemporary version of the saints of the plague, a symbol of hope for better times.

The third position is a series of twelve golden combat policemen, reduced to the shape of the traditional Nevaliashka doll with the iconic protective visor of the special forces. Here the materiality plays a decided role. At first glance, the stoneware sculptures covered with gold luster appear perfect and resistant, but upon closer inspection, minor material-related differences become apparent. This difference turns the series of idealized officials into a collection of individuals.

The sculptures are supported by a platform consisting of three pedestals. These stand for the legislative, executive and judiciary, or symbolically for the pillars of religion,

politics and sex mentioned at the beginning, and symbolize the society in whose service these security organs are, at least theoretically, at least.

The discussion about the ambivalence between the image of the policeman as friend and helper (an expression that became popular in the Third Reich through Heinrich Himmler's propaganda) and police violence is more topical than ever in times when basic democratic values are suspended in favour of the health of the people.

The third group of works is a selection of prints (all "Untitled") with a mixture of political symbolism and eroticism.

All these positions of prints, sculptures and paintings share the criticism of patriarchal power structures and the powerlessness of the individual in the face of such a system. Even though the title Da, Papa is a decided pointer to Russia, the statements of the exhibition have universal validity.

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