

# Lyles & King

**Rosa Loy**

***Herbarium***

**May 18 - June 24, 2023**

**Opening Reception: Thursday, May 18, 5-8pm**

Lyles & King is pleased to present *Herbarium*, an exhibition of paintings by Rosa Loy (b. 1958, Zwickau, Germany). This is her second exhibition with the gallery.

Rosa Loy's paintings feature intimate scenes of women in the company of other women. Imbued with a sense of the fantastic, her work contains visual echoes of classic fairytales, many of which find their origins in Eastern Europe—as the artist herself does. In amongst the sylphs and spirits, her human characters connect and commune in the most natural of settings. Given our current realities, it's possible to perceive Loy's painted universe as an optimistic response to our material world in turmoil. Loy herself is clear to allow the viewer their own space to form any interpretation of her paintings' messages. "I paint from the inside out," she explains. "Painting is subjective and very personal, and I only make an offer of beauty."

A herbarium is a collection of preserved plant specimens, pressed and dried between layers of card or paper. With the exhibition's title in mind, this body of work also serves as an alternate form of preservation, whereby the artist has created a non-linear collection of her own thoughts; a compendium of her imagination and interior images gathered during her daily commute to her studio through her hometown of Leipzig, in the state of Saxony on the eastern edge of Germany.

Given Loy's coming of age within the confines of the former GDR, there are formal elements and parallels that on a surface level recall compositions found within the region's prominent Socialist Realism movement: humans endeavor, directionally and collectively. But Loy's divinations look towards a more spectral and radical utopian vision, where any 'work' is in service of wonder and a broader connection to the natural world. Here, Loy's work can be seen as a continuation of Romanticism, whose ideals of freeing the mind from the established, and a preference for the organic, have been strongly rooted in this area, long before any iron curtain was either hung or draped.

"Romanticism is a possibility to survive life," says Loy. Caspar David Friedrich, who spent the last half of his life in Saxony, is famed for his high romantic vision, where humans exist within the sublime hallows of natural settings. His depictions of hollows, glades and vistas, are distant ancestors to Loy's work. Additionally, the written work of the Brothers Grimm, who sought to document the folk tales of the land, lies very much within the Romantic era, and can be seen as a clear influence too. In a moment where technology seeks to integrate or 'disrupt' every aspect of our lives, Loy offers a naturalistic and humanistic vision, serving the realm of the senses.

*Herbarium* clearly sees Loy at the top of her command, while also willing to push further developments in her own practice. Animals are more present than in previous bodies of work as is the color green. Loy is again clear to avoid any explicit reasoning for this, except to acknowledge that each painting offers some unique form of advice during its genesis. Loy limits each painting's color range, but seen as a whole, *Herbarium* presents as more collectively colorful than other recent bodies of her work. At the center of the exhibition is *Verstärkung*, an image where women harvest smaller women from the earth, a

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large nested egg in the middle. As an eternal symbol of hope, purity, and fertility, the egg gives a clue that Loy's profoundly romantic vision is perhaps a glimpse at a better way forward for us all.

**Rosa Loy** (b. 1958, Zwickau, DE) has had exhibitions at Museum Bensheim, Bensheim, DE; Frauen Museum, Wiesbaden, DE; Space K, Seoul, SK; Kunstverein Münsterland, Coesfeld, DE; Fondazione Coppola, Venice, IT; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, DE; The Shed, New York, US; Museum of Fine Arts, Leipzig, DE; Center for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE; Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, CH; Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, US; Galerie Baton, Seoul, SK; and Galerie Kleindienst, Leipzig, DE; among others. Her work is held in public collections including Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, US; Pérez Art Museum Miami, Florida, US; Museum of Modern Art, New York, US; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, DE; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, US; Drents Museum, Assen, NL; and Busan Museum of Art, Busan, SK; among others. Loy lives and works in Leipzig, DE.