

ORDRUPGAARD

PRESS RELEASE

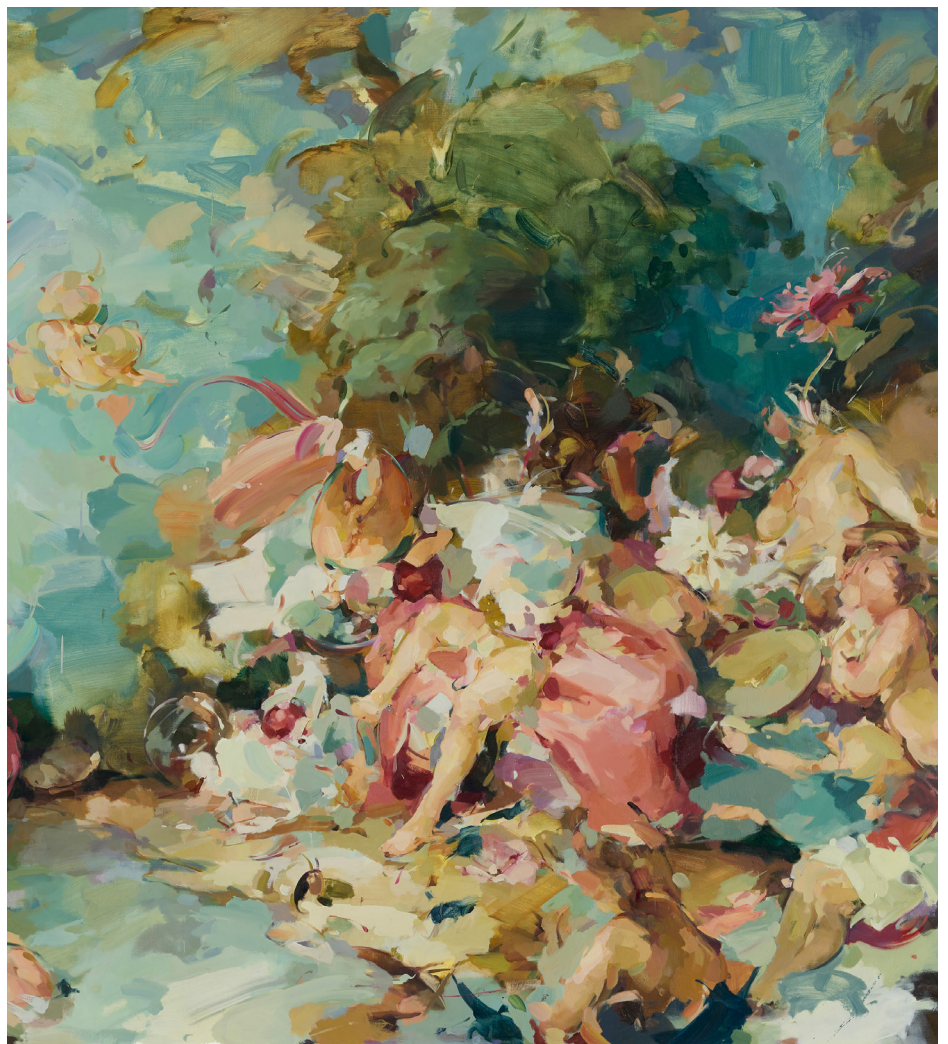
11 September 2024

Exhibition dates

18 September 2024 -
19 January 2025

Press conference

17 September 2024
10-12 am



FLORA YUKHNOVICH INTO THE WOODS

18 SEPTEMBER 2024 – 19 JANUARY 2025

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British artist Flora Yukhnovich (b.1990) is acclaimed for her beautiful paintings in which she adopts the language of Rococo and Baroque, reimagining the dynamism of works by eighteenth-century artists through a filter of contemporary cultural references. Ordrupgaard now presents her first museum exhibition outside the UK. For this occasion, Yukhnovich has created four new paintings shown alongside recent works on loan from collections across the world. The female body is the recurrent motif in the sensually fabling canvases, leading the audience into a veritable forest of references.

'With these paintings, I examine historical tropes that are retold, reused, and rehashed. I, myself, am rehashing them in different ways to try to understand them. The woods might be the studio where things collapse and regrow. But I also like the idea of the forest as a transformative space. You will probably exit the woods at some point, but you'll remember your time there. It will change you. In that way it's like looking at a painting, where you're going 'into the woods' because you have to explore your own psyche in front of a work.' - **Flora Yukhnovich**

The exhibition title *Into the Woods* is characteristic of Yukhnovich's subtly associative and often humorous wordplay, which frequently appears in the titles of her works. Yukhnovich invites her audience into the forest, entering untamed borderlands reminiscent of fantastical and fairy tale worlds. The gap between the conscious and unconscious mind is blurred and historical genres – notably the Rococo – are assimilated: the works spring from one of the popular Rococo genres, *fête galante*, in which flirting nobles meet in forest glades in works by eighteenth-century French masters such as Antoine Watteau, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, and François Boucher.

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'They are thrilling bacchanalia that can make the heart pump faster and the eye dart around the picture plane.' – **Ellen Mara De Wachter**

Existing in a constantly fluctuating state between abstraction and figuration, Yukhnovich's paintings explore ideas surrounding dualities and multiplicities, transcending painterly traditions while fusing high art with popular culture, and intellect with intuition. Mythological goddesses of love take on the appearance of rap queens, juicy pomegranates, and seductive peaks of whipped cream only to dissolve anew into semi-abstract pictures, where the gestural brushwork and spectacular colours assume the lead roles. With these imaginary landscapes, Yukhnovich explores themes such as female lust and temptation, monstrosity and beauty. In contrast to the great masters of the Rococo, it is difficult to identify any male mythological protagonists in Yukhnovich's forest scenes.

ROCOCO REVIVAL AND ORDRUPGAARD

In this way, Yukhnovich takes a fresh look at the Rococo, which has historically been characterised as sentimental, frivolous, and elite. She shares her interest in the Rococo with Wilhelm Hansen, the founder of Ordrupgaard, who staged the exhibition *Det attende Aarhundredes franske Kunst (Eighteenth-Century French Art)* at Kunsthall Charlottenborg in 1935. The exhibition, which was the first major presentation of Rococo art in Denmark, was extremely successful with 85,000 visitors in just six weeks. The genre was reinterpreted in the second half of the 19th century by Impressionists, including Édouard Manet, Berthe Morisot, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, whose works continue to be the mainstay of Ordrupgaard's collection.

Into the Woods is shown alongside *Ai Weiwei – Water Lilies #1*. Both exhibitions mark the 150th anniversary of the 'birth' of Impressionism, with a contemporary artist's gaze on the epoch-making movement and the art that preceded Impressionism.

CATALOGUE

The bilingual exhibition catalogue with Danish and English texts includes an interview with Flora Yukhnovich conducted by Ellen Mara De Wachter, who also wrote *Into the Wilds of the Body* about the sensory dimension in Yukhnovich's art. The essay *Rococo Revival Now and Then* by Dorthe Vangsgaard Nielsen, Chief Curator at Ordrupgaard, is based on Wilhelm Hansen's contribution to the Rococo revival and traces links from the Rococo and Impressionism to Yukhnovich's works.

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Into the Woods, planned in close collaboration with Yukhnovich, presents eleven paintings of which four were created especially for this occasion, along with several studies of the work. The work labels are written by Yukhnovich herself.

The exhibition receives generous financial support from:

Arne V. Schleschs Fond
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Konsul George Jorck og Hustru Emma Jorck's Fond
Lizzie og Ejler Ruges Kunstfond
Ny Carlsbergfondet
Toyota-Fonden

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