

ORDRUPGAARD

PRESS RELEASE

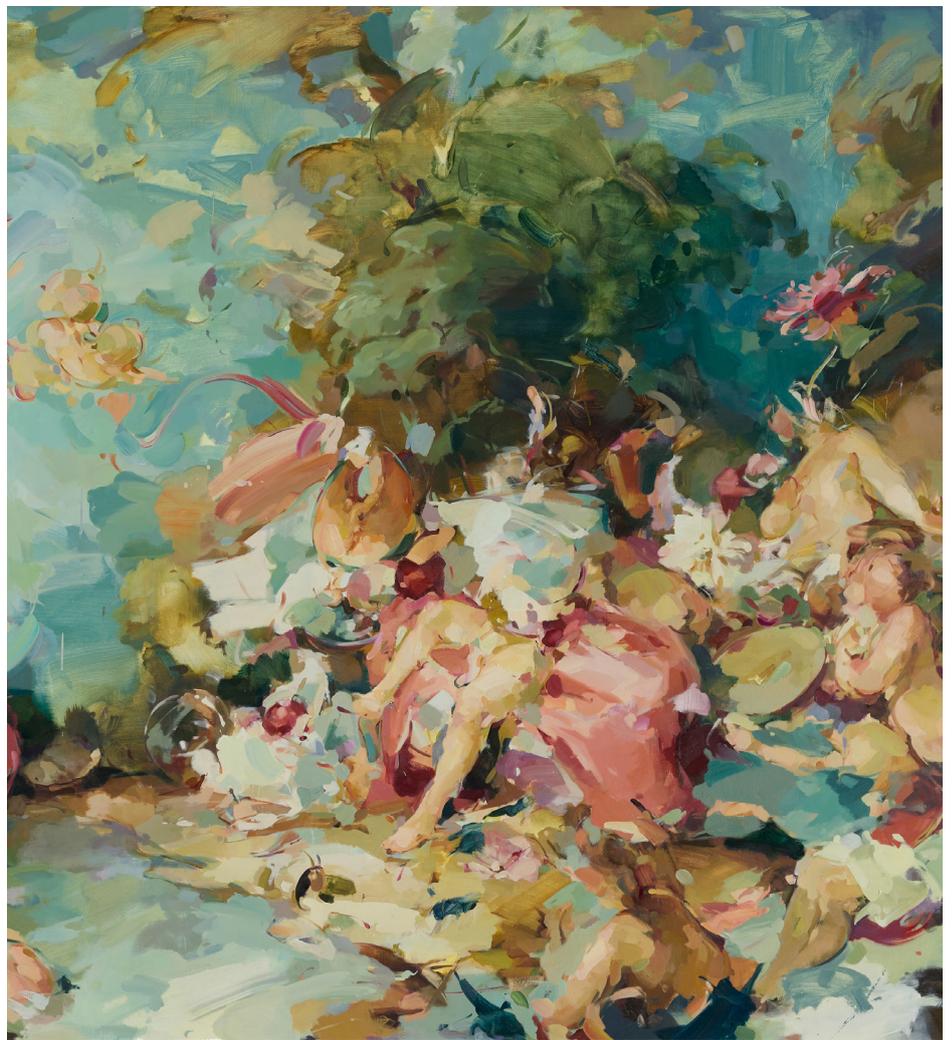
9 October 2024

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

ORDRUPGAARD
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The young British artist, Flora Yukhnovich (b.1990), has made an exceptional entry onto the art scene with staggeringly beautiful pictures which, using the rococo as a starting point, delve into the many layers of civilisation and the subconscious. Having gained considerable international recognition, she has been proclaimed one of the new great masters of painting who will play a central role in art history. Ordrupgaard now presents her in the very first museum exhibition outside Great Britain. For this occasion, Yukhnovich has created four brand-new paintings shown here alongside works loaned from private art collectors across the world. The female body is the recurrent motif in the sensually fabling giant canvases balancing between figuration and abstraction, 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**

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The exhibition title *Into the Woods* seems particularly apt for a show at Ordrupgaard, and it is characteristic of Yukhnovich's always subtly associative and often humorously commenting play of words recurring in the work titles. Using the brush as a magic wand, Yukhnovich invites her audience into the forest, entering untamed borderlands familiar from the world of fantasy and

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fairy tales. 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 great French masters such as Antoine Watteau, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, and François Boucher.

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

Moreover, Yukhnovich crosses prevalent genre conventions by allowing high culture to merge with contemporary popular culture in forest scenes, where mythological love goddesses take on the appearance of rap queens, juicy pomegranates, and seductive peaks of whipped cream. Only to dissolve anew in front of our eyes into semi-abstract pictures, where the gestural brushwork and spectacular colours assume the lead roles. With these imaginary landscapes, Yukhnovich explores themes like female lust and temptation, monstrosity and beauty. In contrast to the great masters of the rococo, it is difficult to spot any male mythological protagonists in Yukhnovich's forest scenes.

The exhibition *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.

ROCOCO REVIVAL AND ORDRUPGAARD

In this way, Yukhnovich takes a fresh look at the rococo which, over the years, repetitively seemed to be rejected as sentimental, frivolous, and elite. Nevertheless, 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 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. In a wider sense, the interest in the rococo is linked to impressionism, which continues to be the mainstay of Ordrupgaard's collection. Artists including Édouard Manet, Berthe Morisot, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir were inspired by eighteenth-century art, including *fête galante* motifs, and using the rococo as their point of departure, they created, like Yukhnovich, a brand-new world of form and motif.

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CATALOGUE

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

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition, planned in close collaboration with Yukhnovich, presents eleven paintings of which four were created especially for this occasion. Furthermore, seven studies for the works are shown. The work tags are written by Yukhnovich herself.

The exhibition receives generous financial support from:

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Solar Fonden af 1978
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Toyota-Fonden

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