

Museo del Novecento and Fondazione Furla
present

PAULINA OLOWSKA
Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers

Sound by Sergei Tcherepnin
Performing Dobra Borkala, Milovan Farronato,
Paulina Olowaska, Sergei Tcherepnin

March 6, 2018
From 6 pm to 9 pm
Sala Fontana, Museo del Novecento, Milan
Free admission. Since the capacity of the Sala Fontana is limited,
there may be a wait to enter

The fourth event in FURLA SERIES #01
Time after Time, Space after Space
Curated by Bruna Roccasalva and Vincenzo de Bellis

Museo del Novecento and Fondazione Furla present Paulina Olowaska, who for the fourth event in *Furla Series #01 - Time after Time, Space after Space* will use the Sala Fontana as a stage for her performance *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers*.

The multifaceted work of Paulina Olowaska draws inspiration from modernist utopias and from American and Eastern European popular culture—particularly that of socialist Poland—to forge a dialogue with history, creating a web of cultural references that explore the notion of feminism and consumerism. Zooming in on figures from the past, the artist unearths small, often forgotten histories; her approach is never nostalgic, but rather guided by a desire to understand their intrinsic value from a contemporary as well as historical standpoint.

Drawing on the work of visionary artist Zofia Stryjeńska (1891-1976), *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers* springs from Paulina Olowaska's ongoing interest in female figures from the past. A leading light of the Polish cultural scene in the interwar period, later consigned to oblivion by the communist regime, Zofia Stryjeńska created a multidisciplinary oeuvre influenced by her country's rituals and folklore. Over the years, Olowaska has based a number of works inspired by this artist, from her paintings for the 2008 Berlin Biennale to the performance she presented in New York at The Kitchen in 2017, *Slavic Goddesses - A Wreath of Ceremonies*, of which *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers* is an outgrowth.

The same deities found in the New York performance are at the heart of *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers*, in which six mannequins arranged in the center of the Sala Fontana wear costumes made by the artist herself, based on Stryjeńska's series of paintings *Bożki słowiańskie* (Slavic Deities, 1918). These surreal garments, with their enormous headdresses and their decorations of peacock feathers and wheat stalks (selected for the Bessie Award for Costume Design in 2017), present fanciful figures from Slavic mythology and folklore: goddesses of mischief, prosperity, fate, spring, winter, and the skies, with "bodies of clay, hair of wheat or branches, thorns and thistle."

Viewers are guided through this ceremony by four “Ushers,” played by Dobrawa Borkala, Milovan Farronato, the composer Sergei Tcherepnin and the artist herself. These mysterious presences bring to life the Sala Fontana and the space overlooking it with live interventions, activating the scene in various ways and leading visitors through a magical, evocative experience.

Special thanks to Ushirka Cooperative and Rabcio Puppet Theater for their help with creating the costumes for the Ushers.

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In-Kind Sponsor: Hans Boodt Mannequins

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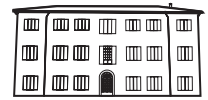
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PAULINA OLOWSKA

Paulina Olowska's artistic practice delves into various media, from painting to video, from installation to performance, often exploring the theme of memory, utopian promises, and popular aesthetics. Her multi-faceted oeuvre establishes a dialogue with the past and borrows imagery from Eastern European and American popular culture, whilst reflecting on how cultural models shape our views of feminism and consumerism.

She attended the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, the School of the Art Institute, Chicago, and the Academy of Fine Arts Gdańsk. Among others, she participated in the CCA Wattis Institute residency, San Francisco (2010) and in the DÄAD residency program in Berlin (2007).

Olowska has had solo exhibitions at the Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2014), Kunsthalle Basel (2013), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2013), Tramway, Glasgow (2010). She also staged performances at Tate Modern, London (*The Mother an Unsavoury Play in Two Acts and an Epilogue*, 2015), Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (*Puppetry in America Is Truly a Lonely Craft*, 2013), and Museum of Modern Art, New York (*Alphabet*, 2012). In January 2017 she presented the ballet *Slavic Goddesses - A Wreath of Ceremonies* at the Kitchen, New York. She has exhibited internationally at Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016), Steirischer Herbst Festival, Graz (2010), and in biennials including Berlin Biennale (2008), Moscow and Istanbul biennials (both 2005), and Venice Biennale (2003).

Olowska has undertaken frequent collaborations with artists including Bonnie Camplin in *Salty Water/What of Salty Water* at Portikus, Frankfurt, in 2007, and Lucy McKenzie, with whom she created the bar Nova Popularna in Warsaw in 2003. In 2014 she received the prestigious Aachen Art Prize, with an associated exhibition at the Ludwig Forum for International Art, Aachen, Germany.

FURLA SERIES #01

Time after Time, Space after Space, co-produced with the **Museo del Novecento in Milan**, is the first edition of the **Furla Series**. Through this project, curated by **Bruna Roccasalva** and **Vincenzo de Bellis** and launched in 2017, **Fondazione Furla** will present exhibitions and events dedicated to some of the leading artists from the Italian and international scene, in collaboration with Italy's foremost art institutions.

The partnership between Fondazione Furla and the Museo del Novecento is a unique opportunity to weave together past, present and future, forging a conversation between twentieth-century masters and key figures of our time. In the year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of Lucio Fontana's death, and the months leading up to it, *Time after Time, Space after Space* is also a tribute to this figure who played a fundamental role in drawing attention to the artistic potential of material gesture, presenting a succession of performances "lit" by his famous *Struttura al Neon per la IX Triennale di Milano* (1951).

The program includes projects by **Alexandra Bachzetsis**, **Simone Forti**, **Adelita Husni-Bey**, **Christian Marclay**, and **Paulina Olowska**, who from September 2017 and April 2018 are invited to reinterpret the museum space through new productions or reenactments of milestone performances from their careers.