

PRESS RELEASE

Tschabalala Self The Bigger Picture

June 19 – July 2, 2024

Opening on Tuesday, June 18, 7 pm – 12 midnight

Melina Merkouri Art & Concert Hall, Hydra, Greece

Opening hours, 7.30 – 11.30 pm

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *The Bigger Picture*, a three-channel video installation by American artist Tschabalala Self, as part of the 25th edition of *Hydra School Projects* at the Melina Merkouri Art & Concert Hall on the Greek island of Hydra. After eight summer exhibitions in Kastro, Antiparos, this is the gallery's ninth - and the artist's first exhibition in Greece. The exhibition is realized with the support of the Pappas Family Collection and project coordination by Valentini Karadimou.

In three channels, *The Bigger Picture* displays a video recording of Self's first live performance, *Sounding Board* (2021). Written and directed by the artist, the play explores themes of domesticity, race, and gender. The dialogue is interspersed with music by Boney M, and the hand painted, sculpturesque stage – set in the bandstand of Harlem's Jackie Robinson Park – employs the distinctive, brightly colored geometry and pattern found in her two-dimensional works. Wearing costumes and shoes designed by the artist in collaboration with UGG, the characters appear as if they are moving through her paintings, existing as living pictures. In her 2023 solo show, *Feed Me, Kiss Me, Need Me*, at CC Strombeek, Belgium, the artist transformed the recording for the first time into an autonomous video installation, for which she also composed a completely new soundtrack. The theatrical scenography not only refers to the original performance location, but also to the theatre of the cultural center.

The piece presents a domestic drama in which emotional communication, gender roles, and power dynamics within intimate relationships are explored through the script. For Self, it is also an experimental performance about human connection and specifically, how one should romantically maintain an artist. A male and female actors perform emotional dialogues that waver between honesty and absurdity. The Boney M cover band accentuates pivotal moments of the drama, much like a choir in a Greek play. Themes of duality and identity are heightened as viewers notice that the two-character play is performed by four different actors. In the middle of the play, the man and the woman switch their lines and repeat the previous dialogues. This results in an overlapping cacophony of accusations. During the performance, phrases are repeated so often that their meanings change, disappear or become entirely emptied.

About Tschabalala Self

Tschabalala Self was born in 1990 in Harlem, NY, and lives and works in New York State. Recent solo exhibitions in museums and public institutions include EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Espoo, FI (2024); FLAG Foundation, New York, NY, US (2024); Swiss Institute, New York, NY, US (2024); CC Strombeek, Grimbergen, BE (2023); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, CH (2023); Consortium Museum, Dijon, FR (2022); Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD, US (2021); ICA Boston, Boston, MA, US (2020); and Hammer Museum, CA, Los Angeles, CA, US (2019). Furthermore Self has participated in numerous group exhibitions at Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, TX, US (2024); The Shah Garg Foundation, New York, NY; US (2023), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, US (2023); ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, DK (2022); Kunsthalle Duesseldorf, Duesseldorf, DE (2021); Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE (2021); Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY, US (2021), Hannover Kunstverein, Hannover, DE (2020); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, IE (2019); Rubell Museum, Miami, FL, US (2019); Philadelphia Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA, US (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA, US (2019); MoMA PS1, New York, NY, US (2019); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL (2019); Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA, US (2019); Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Raleigh, AR, US (2018); Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Sète, FR (2018); and Trigger, New Museum, New York, NY, US (2017).

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

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About the 25th Edition of Hydra School Projects

Dimitrios Antonitsis, the founder and curator of the Hydra School Projects, is employing three venues of the islands port. The women-only exhibition takes its title from the dark, musical film written and directed by François Ozon *Huit Femmes* (Eight Women). The award winning film features an ensemble cast of eight high-profile French actresses Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Huppert, Emmanuelle Béart, Fanny Ardant, Virginie Ledoyen, Danielle Darrieux, Ludivine Sagnier and Firmine Richard. Dimitrios Antonitsis explains: "I have always wanted to curate an exhibition in the way that Francois Ozon casts his films. In this version of *Eight Women*, eight female artists, DJ Avantika, Leonora Carrington, Chiara Clemente, Mary Hatzinikoli, Maro Michalakakos, Valentina Palazzari, Priya Kishore, and Tschabalala Self will reinterpret social traditions and challenge patriarchal structures through their work". Filled with secrets and mysteries, the presentation offers an opportunity to reconsider certain long forgotten values of life. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalog, traditionally in the form of a Greek tetradio, the most commonly used school notebook in Greece.

Hydra School Projects Exhibition Venues:

The Hydra High School

Gardenia Open Air cinema

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