

## Teodora Axente

### Symmetries of the Oneiric



Deer eye, 2018

Symmetries of the Oneiric  
27 February 2018 – 30 March 2019  
Private view: Tuesday 26 February 2019  
6.30–8.30pm

*'It is said that the dream represents a rapid and short succession of images and details that are often impossible to remember and describe, yet the beauty of the phenomenon derives from the fact that it gives us the opportunity to imagine and create personal worlds and refuges which defy the apparent logic of our known universe.'*

rosenfeld porcini is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition by Romanian artist Teodora Axente, 'Symmetries of the Oneiric.' A graduate from the renowned Cluj School, Axente is concerned with reworking the tradition of classical portraiture.

Across both floors of the gallery, the exhibition features a selection of Axente's most recent paintings presenting both ambitious large canvases and smaller works on wood panel.

Although the portrait is a primary focus for many contemporary artists, often their concern is with exploring the identities of the subject, dress and their mannerisms, whilst still maintaining a strong sense of realism. In contrast, Axente is preoccupied with creating a surreal representation of those she paints. Up to her most recent body of works, she would prepare an elaborate set adorning her protagonists with ornamented costumes and extravagant materials, she photographs them in situ and uses these images as source material. These costumes which adorn each figure are key elements in the composition as Axente manages to infuse them with a tactile and uncanny quality. In the most recent works she has changed working method sourcing her subject for popular culture. Her use of a dark colour palette is a fitting backdrop to her constant investigation into the depths of the human psyche. Her eerie symbiosis of animate and inanimate creates the perfect setting for her recent exploration into the theme of metamorphosis. This is expressed in her fusion of both human and animal figures, which is the subject of her most recent compositions.

All the themes that permeate Axente's most recent works are encapsulated in *The Room of Dreams*, the most ambitious large work on display. The painting is heavily inspired by the Dutch XVI Century Old Masters tradition, expressed through a psychoanalytic lens. Objects from Still Life paintings are interwoven in a three-figure composition featuring a diverse range of forms. Animals are shown morphing into human figures, each subject is perched on a chair staring directly at the viewer. Human faces, musical instruments, plates and precious objects amongst others are all depicted, drawn from art historical tradition and re framed within a contemporary and uncanny context.



Ambra and the golden vision, 2018

*Deer Womb* takes its initial inspiration from Velasquez's 'Las Meninas' although Axente's 'Infante', (the figure in the original), is now a child whose arms are seen emerging from the body of a baby deer.

One of the two downstairs galleries will show 3 paintings from her solo exhibition in the Cluj Museum last summer. All feature the same subject with a similar idea of clothing and surreal materiality. Even the most apparently straight forward of the three, *Ambra and the Golden Vision*, creates a feeling of mystery and unease, as the subject is depicted with a finely painted flower covering her eyes. The final room will contain two large portraits from her *Charles* series which were made immediately prior to the museum show. In both, the subjects who assume a very deliberate traditional posture, are standing on raw concrete slabs, creating an unusual setting to these compositions.

The continual evolution in the complexity of her practice whilst remaining capable of taking on the mantle of the Dutch and Spanish Old Masters, signals her very original contribution to the group of artists who have given a primary place in their art to the portrait and how to make it relevant to our contemporary age.

**Teodora Axente** (b. 1984, Sibiu, Romania) received both her MFA and PhD at the University of Art and Design, Cluj Romania, also known as The School from Cluj. Succeeding graduates such as Adrian Ghenie, Ciprian Muresan, Victor Man and Serban Savu. During 2011 Teodora Axente was the recipient of the Essl Art Award resulting in a group exhibition at Essl Museum in Vienna. In 2015 her work was exhibited at Boulder MoCA Colorado in "Defaced", at Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca in "T.A.N.G.O.", and at Hugo Voeten Art Center in Belgium in "My Name Is Artist". In May 2016 she had a solo presentation at Hugo Voeten Art Center. In 2017 Teodora Axente has been awarded the grand prize during the Frissiras Museum's 3rd Frissiras Award for European Painting. In June 2018 she presented her works at at the Museum of Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca. In 2019 the Frissiras Museum in Athens will present a solo exhibition of her works.