

"In the Wrong Film" – Solo Show by Evelina Reiter at Burster Gallery – Review

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that don't feel right, as if we have landed in the wrong film. Evelina Reiter addresses those incidents in her first solo exhibition in Berlin, called *In the Wrong Film* (:*Im falschen Film*), which opened during Gallery Weekend and runs until June 20th at Burster Gallery. She is a Berlin-based feminist artist who captures scenes from everyday life in her figurative, dynamic paintings and invites viewers to reflect on personal experiences and memories. Her work is a social critique in a whimsical and poignant way from the perspective of a young woman.

One week ago, I received an invitation from Johanna Petersen who works at Gallery Burster to visit the exhibition and meet Evelina in person. I have already seen impressions of the show on Instagram and was intrigued to get to know more about her work. It evolved into a wonderful conversation, since we share a common perspective and similar experiences as two non-German but "Berliners-by-choice" 90's girls who often find themselves in the wrong film.

Humour and self-irony are both a survival strategy to overcome fear and an integral part in Evelina Reiter's artistic practice. Her work oscillates between addressing social structures which define women's lives and lighter incidents that take place in the chaotic metropolis. As a painter of her generation, she captures the *Zeitgeist*, reducing scenes of today's Berlin to their essence, presenting the familiar urban scenery through striking lines and bold colours. Grey tones reappear in the background or the floor of public spaces where the city's urban figures turn into main characters who star in their own film or sometimes slip into those of others. GenZ-coded semiotics with text messages on smartphones resemble the aesthetic of graphic novels in many of her works (like *Carl*, *Liebe Grüße aus New York*, *Fragile Masculinity*).

As we enter the gallery, on the left is hanging the painting *Boys Club*, a Medusa-like self-portrait of the artist standing next to a *Venus* sculpture on Evelina's signature grey-painted floor, a constant in her work, capturing her impressions of an Art Fair she attended. "Some people don't recognise that the paintings are self-portraits, and when I tell them, they get a bit disappointed.", adds Evelina.

Women artists are still labelled as "too self-referential" when they are vocal about their experiences or translate them visually into their work. In phenomenological terms, self-observation is just the method she uses to approach her lived experience, while simultaneously observing others. Experimenting with grey zones in public spaces, she initiates a discourse between main- and side-characters, offering a counterpart to the male-dominated representation of the German metropolis, while striving for safety and visibility for FLINTA* people in urban spaces, aiming to reclaim the narrative and rewrite the rules.

The central wall opposite of the gallery's facade is painted in a blue-grey colour, putting Evelina's drawings in the centre of the exhibition which offer an insight into her artistic

process. Starting from drawings on A5 paper with coloured pencil, she always sketches from memory, intuition and imagination without using photographs. From the drawings, the initial stage of her work, medium- and large-scale paintings with a matte finish later unfold, relying on oil and turpentine in her practice.

Her visual storytelling zooms in relatable daily life struggles like cleaning the house, renovating the floor, carrying the bags, lifting a stroller or running into an ex, rendering the interplay of observing and being observed or even ignored. In that, she captures moments of ambiguity; proximity and alienation, insecurity and self-assertion.

As we step into the inner space of the gallery on the left, we are confronted with familiar situations from Berlin's urban life. In *Pleasure Doing Business*, the artist addresses the question of "Who takes up space in public places?" with postures that symbolise gender dynamics and distance despite the proximity. On the one hand, an unsettling, yet so familiar "manspreading" scene, opposed to a female-coded figure sitting with her legs crossed "like a lady", but restrained; gender-based societal expectations and normalised behaviours.

On the contrary, an intimate scene unfolds in the *Nude (Nail Salon)* painting on the left. "What was the inspiration behind that?", I ask Evelina. "I was at the nail salon, and the manicurist was a beautiful woman who looked me in the eyes and gently held my hand, so I felt like capturing that moment of intimacy."

Her paintings narrate the everyday life of any young woman in Berlin, such as doing bureaucracy, but also self-care, running errands and commuting. From the safe space of a nail salon with the rainbow in the background, a place of socialisation and "me-time", to unsettling scenes on the metro with the iconic patterned fabric, to moments of dissociation or solitude. People in constant movement, along with the hectic underground, are recurring motifs in her work, where the grey floor becomes the stage for infinite possibilities, annoying or nice encounters, risky moves, and new beginnings.

Following the Berlin triplet, a painting with a text message from New York, *Liebe Grüße aus New York (:Greetings from New York)*, marks the transition from an informal to a formal communication at the office of a German bank *Sparkasse Büro*, on the right side. We stand in front of the work, pause, and talk a bit about the bureaucratic challenges of a non-EU-passport, the constant pressure of having to prove your worth and that you are successful enough to have your visa renewed. This pressure definitely writes into her artistic practice and challenges her creativity and productivity. "If you notice, Slavic artists always serve!", she points out. Apart from that, we discuss about the stereotypes regarding Slavic upbringing. "Ballet and piano prepare us to fulfil the societal expectations for women, such as to have discipline, always look beautiful, neat, and feminine with a slim waist and good posture." I wonder if her choice to paint her figures with too bright shoulders, almost body-builder-like, is an act of resistance to that ideal.

"What do you think people like about your work?", I ask her. She instantly replies, "The directness and humour!" She goes on, "That's what a collector told me recently who bought the

painting *Getrennt bitte!* (:Seperately please!) “I find it interesting that my collectors are mainly men, although in my paintings I often humiliate or criticise them.” (see, *The Ritz*)

To me, this directness comes from successfully focusing on a scene and excluding everything redundant, giving the impression of a screenshot, since our brains are now trained on rapid image transitions. Working local adds to that, making her artwork more relatable to Berliners or people who live in international metropolises. Evelina Reiter gives a sharp and fresh perspective, carrying the long tradition of Berlin painters of the ‘20s and “New Realism” movement with an expressionistic twist while still being very much a painter of her generation. She hopes for a happy, i.e. inclusive ending, where we all land in the same film which does justices to everyone’s narrative.

More about Evelina Reiter:

Evelina Reiter Reiter (1998*) is a Berlin-based artist and curator. She studied painting at Weißensee Art Academy in Berlin, where she completed her Master Studies in 2023 under Professor Nader Ahriman. Her work has been shown in numerous exhibitions, including Academy POSITIONS Berlin Art Fair (2023), Kunstraum Bethanien (2024), and Galerie im Saalbau (2024). She was awarded the Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt scholarship and was a finalist for the Phoenix Prize in 2024 in Munich.

Since 2024 she collaborates with Burster Gallery. She took part in: *Same same but different in Berlin* (2024) and showed her first solo with the gallery, *Glückssache* (:A Matter of Luck) in Karlsruhe (2025). Her current show with the gallery, *Im falschen Film* (:In the Wrong Film) is her first solo show in Berlin, and is on view till June 20th. Two of her works are currently exhibited as part of the gallery’s international initiative in New York, *The Curator Lab*. Earlier this year, she also presented another solo show, called *The Great Escape* at Gallery Drewes in Hamburg.

Her feminist approach both in her artistic and curatorial work stands for empowerment, sex positivity, and inclusivity. In 2025, she co-founded with artist Julie Legouez the *Gorgons Group* (Gruppe Gorgone e.V.), an initiative which runs the exhibition series “Fight or Flight”. Their upcoming show “Fight or Flight III: SEX” takes place in Berlin next month, from July 10th to 19th at Kunstquartier Bethanien.

Links:

About the exhibition at Burster Gallery: <https://www.galerieburster.com/exhibitions/im-falschen-film/>

Evelina Reiter’s Website: <https://evelinareiter.com/>

Her Instagram Accounts: @reiterkunst and @gruppe_gorgone

The Gallery’s Instagram Account: @galerieburster

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Written by: Helena (Chasapopoulou) for Burster Gallery