



Valerie Reding

monsters
08.02.2024–29.02.2024

In collaboration with
David Weishaar
Lou Drago
Tyler Holmes

artistic direction & concept Valerie Reding
performance, photography, costumes, make-up, scenography & text Valerie Reding
painting The Heart Is Ours David Weishaar
soundscape Lou Drago
music for performance Tyler Holmes
people portrayed & texts Aron Smith, Bast Hippocrate, Pauline Canavesio aka BORA,
Robyn Cloé lyongo, Salou Sadras, William Cardoso
lights Thomas Giger
costume assistance Nahuel Mendez
ceramic objects Kwadrat by Luka Stamenkovic
production assistance Nicolas Dubosson
communication & flyers Valerie Reding

A dimly lit room filled with vibrant banners, revealing mysterious humanoid creatures, seemingly floating in space, gazing at you - sometimes. A colossal painting, inviting you into a dreamlike landscape with strange figures, lurking in the shades of a deep forest, standing close to one another - calm, powerful and proud. An eerie sound is haunting the air - if you listen closely, you can hear their voices. And if you are patient enough, you might catch a body moving through this strange universe - disturbing and freeing.

In collaboration with Lausanne-based painter David Weishaar, composer Tyler Holmes from Los Angeles and Berlin-based sound artist Lou Drago, the transdisciplinary artist and performer Valerie Reding creates with monsters an oneiric and compelling multi-sensorial space to share the powerful stories of those that have experienced abuse in interpersonal relationships - stories that are so often silenced in our society.

Combining performance, photography, painting, sound and text in an immersive multi-media installation, monsters fiercely reclaims the monstrosity that is projected on those who speak up against abuse (of power) and systems of oppression. With an intersectional approach, Valerie Reding's monsters is not only an empowering celebration of the liberating power of one's voice, resilience, healing, community, collective care - and love. It is also a profound, sensitive and thought-provoking reflection on the complex interconnections between interpersonal and societal power relations.

THE HEART IS OURS
By David Weishaar

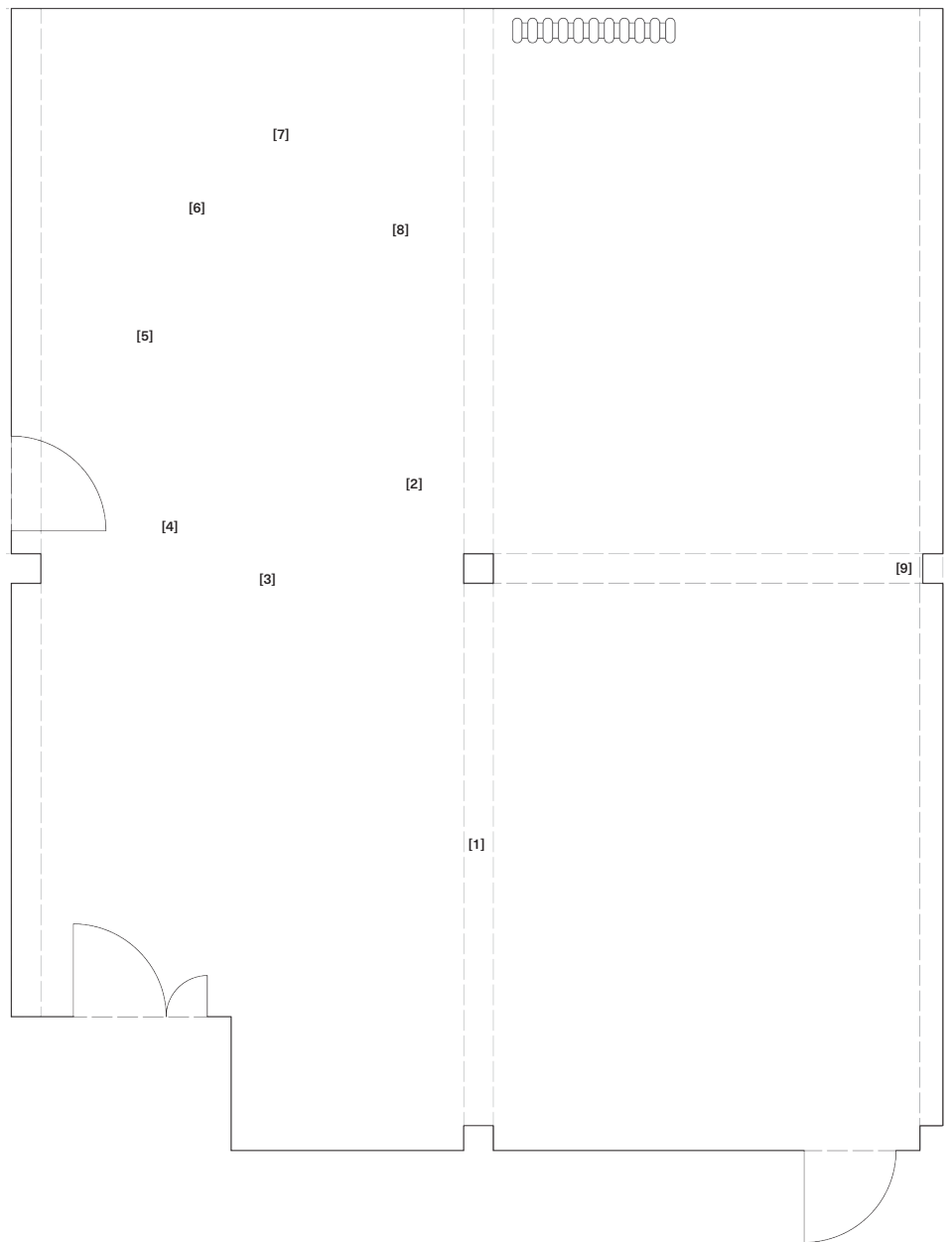
The Heart Is Ours is inspired by the series of paintings Nastagio degli Onesti, created by S. Botticelli during the 15th century.

The tale of Nastagio degli Onesti unveils the story of a young man rejected by the woman who was promised to marry him. While wandering through the forest, heartbroken and lost, he is startled by the appearance of a furious horseman massacring a naked young woman. The horseman suddenly speaks to Nastagio: "As soon as we appear, I catch her, I stab her, open her chest, tear out her heart, and feed it to the dogs."

The horseman and the young woman are actually revenants, cursed to reappear every Friday in the forest, endlessly repeating the same gruesome scene. The curse was a punishment because both of them were doomed for their „unmoral“ behavior - the woman, because she was damned for refusing the marriage because "her cold heart never opened to love or compassion" and the horseman, because he committed suicide due to the woman's refusal of marrying him. This pagan story was very popular during the Italian Renaissance and served as warning tale to any woman refusing marriage.

In response to the warm invitation by Valerie Reding to collaborate for monsters, I wanted to revisit and reinterpret some of the thematic and iconographic elements of Botticelli's series of paintings Nastagio degli Onesti, in order to bring a symbolic re-reading as well as a strong feeling of empowerment to the people represented, side by side: Aron, Bast, Pauline, Robyn, Salou and Will.

What could Nastagio have rediscovered, centuries later, during his stroll through the forest? The forest is as dense and all-enveloping as it used to be, but the sky is hellishly red, radiating. The twilight scene, perhaps "post-rave", echoing a group ritual, now represents a frieze of united individuals, facing the viewer with sharp, luminescent eyes. The dogs are by their side, defiant, guarding the recovered heart. Several whispers can be heard, seemingly emanating from the swamp. They sing: The Heart is Ours!



[1] Valerie Reding
monsters (Aron & Salou), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[2] Valerie Reding
monsters (Pauline & Bast), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[3] Valerie Reding
monsters (Salou & Will), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[4] Valerie Reding
monsters (Will & Aron), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[5] Valerie Reding
monsters (Robyn & Salou), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[6] Valerie Reding
monsters (Aron & Pauline), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[7] Valerie Reding
monsters (Pauline & Bast), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[8] Valerie Reding
monsters (Bast & Robyn), 2023
original print on tarp (recto verso)
120 cm x 180 cm

[9] David Weishaar
The Heart Is Ours, 2023
acrylic and oil paint on canvas
200 cm x 300 cm
(triptych of 3 canvases of 100 cm x 100 cm each)