

**Rufa, self-taught since 1990, lives and works in Berlin.**

**General:**

Rufa paints what surrounds her. With her works, she opens up a *kaleidoscopic view of people, landscape and nature*.

Her pictures are characterized by an immediate liveliness and invite the viewer to immerse themselves in them. Rufa's pictures move in a broad spectrum, *her works include landscapes, still lifes, individual and group portraits*, nudes and surrealistic scenes.

The essence of the subject is always in the foreground for the autodidact. She also makes her choice of motif intuitively and depending on her mood, she refuses to limit herself to a single pictorial genre. Much of Rufa's work is characterized by a soft spot for large formats. According to the artist, these support a true understanding of the subject and enable a special form of understanding through their presence and size. The relationship to what is portrayed plays a central role for Rufa, and it is important to her that the subject provides impetus for intellectual debate in the working process.

With her style of expression, which is *characterized by realism*, Rufa consciously distances herself from any staging and/or artificiality of the representation. The artist describes artificial realities as exclusively visually shaped. For Rufa, these cannot claim to be emotions.

The effort to make the "essential" tangible and to transport emotions is clearly noticeable in her *portraits*. These pictures are touching – even if those portrayed are strangers to the viewer. Looking at the art market over the last few decades, the popularity of this genre has fluctuated significantly. Accordingly, the artist also describes her works as the 'not shown', 'disappeared pictures'.



*Johannes 40x100 cm. oil on canvas*

*The eyes of the portrayed* often provide the "key" through which the recipient succeeds in developing access to the figures. In her portraits, Rufa likes to depict the figures in thoughtful poses. In some works, this suggests a dreamy, introverted character. The viewer remains in the dark as to whether the figure really returns his gaze or whether it is completely absorbed in looking through the viewer. With this *line of sight, the effect of intimacy*, which is generally already present in the works, increases.



Ladybugs 120x150 cm. oil on canvas

In the *group picture Ladybugs*, the artist combines different genres. The three children's figures, who are completely absorbed in contemplating a ladybug, appear very two-dimensional. The *figures appear mounted almost collage-like* on the bordeaux-colored background, which is reminiscent of the folds of a blanket. This impression is supported by a detailed element in the foreground of the picture: a basket full of apples, which is lit by a candle. The apples are sculpted, reminiscent of classic vanitas elements. With this arrangement, the artist creates irritation. The viewer's viewing habits are broken, *the combination of surface and form creates tension*.

As is characteristic of Rufa's work, even in this early work she creates a special intimacy within the depiction, as well as between what is depicted and the viewer. The figures have an immediate presence. The artist lets the viewer *participate in a private moment of her figures*. The recipient witnesses the urge to discover of the three boys, who are absorbed in contemplating a ladybug. A moment of the "absolute", a lingering in the amazement of the moment. The suggestion of intimacy is heightened by the almost amorphous background, which seems to envelop the children like a cave and protect them from external influences. *The Kleine Muck is characterized by just as much strength and intimacy.*



*Little Muck 60x80 cm. oil on canvas*

In this picture, too, the focus is on the portrayed figure, the background tells the viewer nothing about the surroundings. Instead, *the little Muck seems completely self-absorbed and lost in himself, wrapped in a warm background.*

Given the technique used and the compelling effect, the fact that this is Rufa's first work is particularly impressive.

*The female bodies that Rufa paints appear raw and rough.* Rough and wrinkled, her nudes defy any form of perfectionism. The application of paint appears massive, almost aggressively saturated. With these bodies, the artist clearly rejects the idea of femininity that dominates in Western societies. *For her, the prevailing*

*ideal of beauty represents a violation of female consciousness.* Rufa wants to create reality instead of artificiality. This succeeds - even if (or perhaps precisely because) in some cases the perspective and proportions are not right - the coarse, human forces itself into the foreground with immense violence, which stands in a tense discrepancy to the bodies, *which sometimes appear vulnerable.*

The viewer can hardly escape the effect of these pictures. The women remain present, even if there is no eye contact with the recipient in some of the pictures. Here, too, the bodies work on their own, the surroundings are not recognizable for the viewer. *The 'bare' body is the essence*, whether truly naked or more exposed than covered with almost transparent cloths. Wrinkles - be it in the material texture of the background or in the faces and hands of those portrayed - serve the artist as a means of expressing liveliness. With them, Rufa wants to transform lived experiences onto the canvas.

In her *surrealist works, Rufa uses symbols* that also appear again and again in her still lifes and portraits. For example, *flowers stand for life, apples symbolize love.* In her dream images, these symbols, which characterize the "living", encounter a human coolness that is reflected in the dominant blue and green tones. At the same time, the artist combines a 'purity' with this color palette, as can also be found in the four elements. In contrast to the other groups of works, the background is processed in these *surrealist-inspired pictures*. Ways and doors that represent life – or the search for it – often get lost in it. Needles represent a recurring motif. They denote the possibility of anchoring oneself in life, no matter where and under what circumstances.

As mentioned, Rufa's style of painting concentrates on the foreground of the picture, the figure as the essence of the picture's content. The *background or its design becomes increasingly unimportant for the artist.*

Current works such as the *3 Madonnas*, in which Rufa leaves the canvas in the background completely untouched, appear as a consistent continuation and logical reduction.



*Three Madonnas 60x80 cm. oil on canvas*

### **3 Madonnas**

The viewer's attention is focused purely on the foreground of the picture. Three "black" women are shown side by side. The viewer's gaze is drawn to the figure in the middle. This is supported by the fact that the figure in the middle is also viewed by the women flanking her. But the woman's gaze falls right through the recipient, she seems to be gazing thoughtfully into the distance.

Rufa describes *the three Madonnas as a symbol of free togetherness*. In addition, she wants to use them to irritate the Eurocentric "white gaze", which usually connotes Madonnas with "white" skin color. In this *motif, religious and spiritual elements meet in the artist's essentialist striving*.

Again Rufa succeeds in capturing the viewer's attention and inviting him to enter into a dialogue with the picture and to engage with Rufa's view of life.

Text: Monika Gorillé,

So far, Rufa's works have been shown in the following exhibitions:

**Personal exhibitions:**

since 1991 as a painter

1992 in the “Kaffee 100” gallery, Berlin

1992 in the Medical Center, Berlin

1994 in the VIZ-DATEX Center Berlin

1995 in the “studio im hochhaus” gallery, Berlin

1995 in the "Galerie 100” group exhibition “Dialogue 4”, Berlin

1996 in the Citizens' Initiative Gallery, Berlin

1996 in the “Sud-Ost” gallery, Berlin

1997 exhibition in Berlin, Agastrasse

1997 at the 1st art fair in the Allee-Center, Berlin

1998 “Bewag” exhibition in Berlin

1999 exhibition in Hamburg

1999 exhibition in Leipzige (end of the trade fair)

2000 International Art Fair Gallery Bastil" Paris

2001 International Art Fair in Berlin

2002 International Art Fair in Lausanne, Switzerland

2002 gallery in Hamburg

2002 International Art Fair Gallery “La Bastil" Paris

2004 Gallery “Canape”

2004 exhibition in the Canape gallery

2004 Gallery Albergo Berlin Schonefeld

2012 at Galerie Neumann Uckermark Prenzlau

2012 International art fair “Berliner Liste” in Berlin Germany

2015 in the Galerie Dominican Monasteries Prenzlau

**Educational studies:** Norway, USA, France, Denmark, Amsterdam

2016- Uzbekistan

2017- Israel Jerusalem

2018- Bulgaria

2020- Macedonia

2021- France

2022- France