



AND



MAREN KARLSON

Soft Fists

15 December 2017 - 20 January 2018

Private View:

14 December 2017, 18:00 - 21:00

Overnight, very
Whitely, discreetly,
Very quietly

Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.

Nobody sees us,
Stops us, betrays us;
The small grains make room.

Soft fists insist on
Heaving the needles,
The leafy bedding,

Even the paving.
Our hammers, our rams,
Earless and eyeless,

Perfectly voiceless,
Widen the crannies,
Shoulder through holes. We

Diet on water,
On crumbs of shadow,
Bland-mannered, asking

Little or nothing.
So many of us!
So many of us!

We are shelves, we are
Tables, we are meek,
We are edible,

Nudgers and shovers
In spite of ourselves.
Our kind multiplies:

We shall by morning
Inherit the earth.
Our foot's in the door.

(Sylvia Plath, "Mushrooms")



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An immortal snack, a delicacy, sacred, a cure, alive for hundreds of years, protecting me, healing me, transformation, invisible, silent, universal veil, a mystery, uncanny, a secret spirit, a ghost, a messenger into the underworld, a transmutation, a Menetekel, atomic bomb cloud, poison, they secrete darkest night, rot, decay, morbid growth, disease, devil's droppings, pure evil-

Someone said that extraterrestrial life won't be anything resembling a human. It will be a fungus. Do we turn into space mold once we leave planet earth? Turning from hard to soft in the end...

A secret community; a living ring, an independent organism, marks where the devil rested her milk churn — a fairy ring is both good and evil. A single hypha grows underground, turns into a web of mycelium, and spreads outwards, exhausting the nutrients in the center, therefore creating a circle. The center dies, and a ring of mushrooms emerges on its outer edges, appearing suddenly in a meadow, or around trees, out of nowhere. Hexenringe ("witches rings"), how fairy rings are called in German, are said to be sites of buried treasure. A treasure is hidden inside the circle of fungi — but it can only be retrieved with the help of witches. You may die while trying to find something, being forced to dance with the witches and their fairy friends until the point of exhaustion or madness. Maybe you will be made into a slave in the fairies' underground realm.

(If a fungus called "death baby" is growing in your garden, someone close to you will die soon.)

Scientists recently discovered that a mysterious type of gut fungus plays a crucial role in auto immune diseases of the intestinal organs — a special kind of evil fungus that destroys the good gut bacteria and lets the bad ones flourish. Has gut fungus turned me into a witch? Does intestinal fungus mean true inner beauty? A treasure buried deep inside? An uprising growing from within? A secret circle gathering? Life arising from within death; always dying at the center so a new fruiting body can emerge at the edges! In some African folklore, mushrooms symbolized the human soul, or the souls of the dead. Once I leave planet earth, will my inner fungus be united with the mold from outer space? Will space crone and space mold unite to become immortal mycelium? A silky gown of space mold for the the moldy space crone!

Earth in crone phase, our kind multiplies, bye bye, you dirty, rotten, diseased hag... you're almost like a woman!

MAREN KARLSON is a drawer and painter living and working in Los Angeles and Berlin.

PUSHKIN & GOGOL is a contemporary art gallery based in Kreuzberg with a private office and viewing space in Charlottenburg. The name Pushkin & Gogol is the title of a fake play written by Soviet-era absurdist Daniil Kharms. Director Kevin Rubén Jacobs originally founded OFG.XXX (b. 2011 a.k.a. Oliver Francis Gallery) in Dallas, Texas, and produced more than 50 exhibitions and performances with local and international emerging and mid-career artists. From 2013 - 2015, he served as curator at the Goss-Michael Foundation managing one of the leading contemporary British art collections in the United States.

For sales or press information, please contact Kevin Rubén Jacobs by email info@pushkinandgogol.com. For gallery news and updates, add us on Instagram [@pushkinandgogol](https://www.instagram.com/pushkinandgogol).