

CHOREOGRAPHY OF SPECIES : ROSA TANNENZAPFEN, 2013

Oil on canvas 20 x 20 cm, 13 elements

Curated by Elena Tzotzi and Marianne Zamecznik

The potato & the goddess

In the nineteen-seventies Marija Gimbutas developed a fundamental glossary and a pictorial “script” for the religion of the Old European Great Goddess.

The amorphous potato is reminiscent of the Goddess-Mother Creator cult objects/figurines collected and interpreted by the Gimbutas. According to her, the figurines represent or embody the Great Mother who gives birth to all things from her womb. Gimbutas built up a convincing argument for understanding the agricultural communities of Neolithic Europe, the agricultural peoples’ beliefs concerning sterility and fertility, the fragility of life, the constant threat of destruction, and the periodic need to renew the generative processes of nature, the figurines were central to the Goddess Cultus. “The main theme of Goddess symbolism is the mystery of birth and death and the renewal of life, not only human, but all life on earth and in the whole cosmos. This symbolic system represents cyclical, not linear, mythical time.”

The emancipation of the patented potato

As opposed to the notion of cyclical time, our potato also represents the geopo-

litical and economical aspects of one of the most mundane, everyday agricultural product in our time; the potato as a produce for consumption. It symbolises the complex interests, both economical and political, that have direct effect on the production of the various varieties of potatoes (and all kinds of food), that are available - or not - to the consumers through the market. In her ongoing project “Potato Perspective” artist Åsa Sonjasdotter has gathered an impressive bank of knowledge on potato varieties, their history as well as a map of the political and economical forces that shape the development of potato varieties today. Potato perspective has resulted in several activities, amongst others the “Order of the Potato” developed in collaboration with Prinzesinnengarten in Berlin in 2010 (for more info on “the order” see <http://www.potatoperspective.org>) Rosa Tannenzapfen, or Pink fir apple, is one of the oldest varieties documented in Europe. Its earliest origin is documented in England in 1850. In February 2013 Rosa Tannenzapfen was selected as the potato of the year 2013 by Bioland, Germany’s largest organic farmers’ association. Its shape is reminiscent of a pine cone, because of their very overgrown, finger-shaped tubers, with deep, often scale-like eyes.



