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## Valio Tchenkov

Soma  
Solo exhibition

11 November 2022 – 30 December 2022

Opening: 11 November, Friday, 16:00 – 20:00, in the presence of the artist  
Sarieva / Gallery, Plovdiv

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Sarieva Gallery is pleased to present the solo show of Munich-based Bulgarian artist Valio Tchenkov. The exhibition features a selection of the newest paintings by the painter, along with works from the 2017 – 2021 period, combined under the exhibition title "Soma".

"Soma" is the daily dose of the substance, which Aldous Huxley described in his dystopic novel "Brave New World" as a drug, prescribed to each member of a happy and steady society. No one is supposed to be pensive, careworn or saddened in it.

The spirits must be high and the public must be content and well-functioning. Every citizen carries their daily portion of "Soma" in their pockets and is always urged to consume it, if feeling wistful or worried. And though all the inhabitants of the Earth are carefree and permanently happy, the price they pay for achieving this idyll is the loss of strong feelings, family, and the arts. The story in the book "Brave New World" is set in the distant future (26th century) when artificial reproduction technology, eugenics and sleep-learning have been developed to a level to become the main factors shaping society; however, many contemporaries have expressed the view that the book speaks of today, of here and now, in a brilliant way.

Valio Tchenkov, who is an ardent follower of Huxley's "philosophy", shares that in his life scenario he regularly takes his dose of "Soma" on his own prescription and discretion in his studio on the fifth floor at 31 Hamsa Street in Munich. And it is through the solo exhibition at Sarieva Gallery that the artist provides an opportunity for art lovers to take a little of his "Soma" and to discern their own reflections in the typical for the artist funny, bizarre, fantastic and unusual characters that exist between the art in the studio and what we call reality – the world outside. In purely visual terms, the artist recreates this zero-gravity state of conflict, not simply through the mastery of painting in creating the allegorical mystical characters and their actions, but also by the freedom to challenge himself as a painter, to use applied mundane elements of everyday life that he incorporates into his paintings.

Whether these "Soma" characters are grotesque and alluding to political and cultural figures as in Huxley's work, or they represent everyday symbols of ourselves perhaps makes no difference. As Valio Tchenkov points out, the important thing is that we accept everything with self-awareness, a dose of self-mocking ability about the imperfection of choices, of the self and of society, and a sense of humour.

The exhibition will open in the presence of the artist and will run from 11 November 2022 to 30 December 2022 at Sarieva Gallery, Plovdiv.

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Valio Tchenkov was born in 1966 in Svishtov, Bulgaria. He lives and works in Munich, Germany. Tchenkov studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia and the Akademie der Bildenden Kuenste, Munich. The artist has presented solo shows in galleries such as BELLEPARAIS, Munich, Galerie Steinle, Munich, Galerie Florian Sundheimer, Munich, Galerie Royal, Munich, Galerie Nagel-Draxler, Cologne, Credo Bonum Gallery, Sofia and Sariev Contemporary, Plovdiv. Some of his participations in group-exhibitions include: "Denkraum Deutschland", Curator Miro Craemer, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany; "Jahresgaben", Kunstverein München, Munich, Germany, "Everything Was Forever, Until it Was No More", Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA), Latvia, curated by Katerina Gregos; "Poesie Summer Watou", Belgium, curated by Jan Hoet; "Fuori Uso", Pescara, curated by Agnes Kohlmeyer; "Sweet Case Eluminated", MAC/VAL Museum Paris, curated by Katia Angelova; and "Conviction", Dafen Art Museum, China, curated by Wenie Wong, "Poeziezomer", curated by Jan Hoet, Watou, Belgium; "Why Duchamp? From Object to Museum and Back (125 years)", curated by Maria Vassileva (SAMCA, 2012).

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