

Meissen Propaganda Dish,
Watercolor on paper, diameter 10 inches, 2001



Cornelia Thomsen

The exhibition also includes twelve Meissen Propaganda Dishes, watercolors combining traditional decoration with ideological slogans in a parody of the incongruous atmosphere at the Meissen Porcelain Company while Thomsen worked there producing luxury objects for the capitalist market yet surrounded by communist propaganda. Each is meticulously painted on the reverse with the famous blue "Crossed Swords" mark of the Meissen Factory.

The collectivist pressures of the time are expressed in a series of group portraits based on Thomsen's own contemporary photographs. These depict different stages of her life and give an insight into both the private and the public aspects of everyday existence in East Germany, which always included a political dimension. In a final series of drawings, Thomsen evokes the memorable night of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Also featured is *Stripes*, an example of Cornelia Thomsen's more recent abstract painting in oil on canvas.



Stripes Nr. 76 + 77, oil on canvas, 84 x 112 inches, 2014



School Assembly 1985,
Watercolor on paper, 2011



Cornelia Thomsen

Born in Rudolstadt (Thuringia) in former East Germany, Cornelia Thomsen completed a four-year apprenticeship at the Meissen Porcelain Company in Saxony, staying with the company until 1994. In the same year she moved to the Frankfurt/Main area of former West Germany and studied Visual Arts at the University of Art and Design of the State of Hesse. In 2006 she moved with her husband and three children to New York, where she has lived and worked ever since.

Role Models
Oil on canvas, each 24 x 20 inches, 2011



Cornelia Thomsen

Held to mark the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, this special exhibition at the German Consulate in Manhattan looks back at Thomsen's two decades as a young citizen of the communist state with a selection of works that reflect her varied background, ranging from realistic portraiture to purely abstract compositions. Among the highlights of the show is a series based on formal portrayals of prominent East German officials who were active when she was growing up. Similar pictures used to be hung in public buildings and were carried around as banners during state-sponsored demonstrations for "Peace and Socialism." A group painting of three girls evokes the coercive nature of the former East German regime, which trained young people in special camps with the aim of making them model citizens of the promised communist paradise.

Cornelia Thomsen

Hypocrisies, Pressures and Ironies of Life in Communist East Germany

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