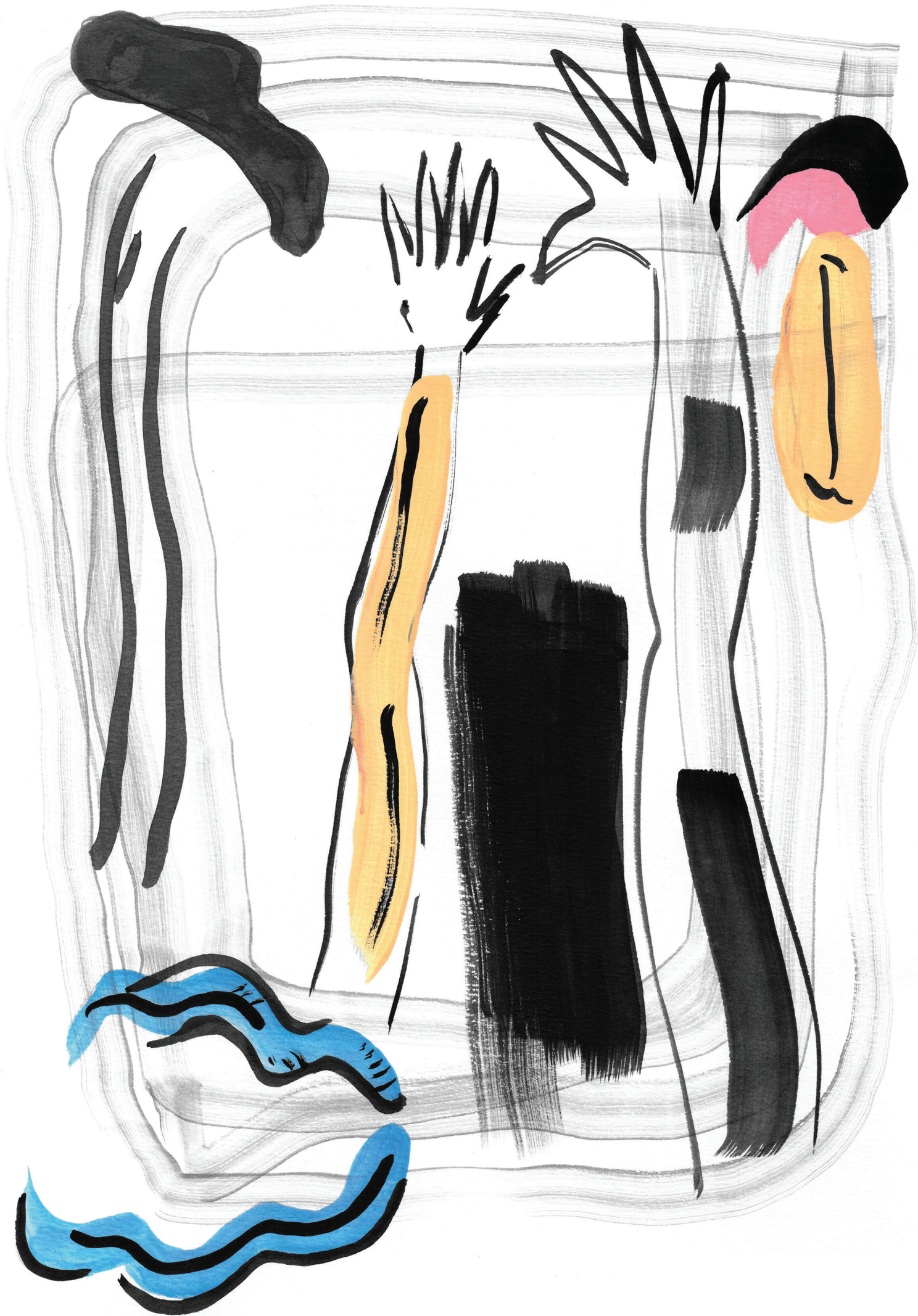


sofia stevi

tell me if I am too much



Tell me if I am too much

Sofia Stevi is an artist who is interested in opposites; in living but also dreaming. Her paintings convey a simultaneous sense of passively observing and actively experiencing different spaces. The spaces in question are often confused yet domestic, and might fuse indoor and outdoor elements, or sexual symbols and psychedelic patterns. Gravity and perspective are largely lost, re-enacting a sense of moving through unrestricted space and time.

For her exhibition and residency in Celerina, Stevi used ink and watercolours to produce a series of large-scale paintings on untreated cotton fabric, and small drawings on paper. The paintings form an installation that becomes a unique sea of colour, with semi-transparency confronting calligraphic black lines. The iconography of these new paintings grew from sights that became routine, but never wholly familiar, to the artist on her daily walks in the Alpine forests during her residency; these can be read as mushrooms, slugs, trees and bones, while taking on an anthropomorphic and often sensual dimension. The narrative is by turns bizarre, foreboding and witty, while remaining largely 'un-readable'.

Sofia Stevi was artist in residence in Celerina From July to August 2016. The artist continued working on her residency through the duration of the exhibition, adding and removing work, thus creating an exhibition concept that is fluid and experimental, and an exercise in both making and presenting.

Alma Zevi, Celerina, August 2016



Agapi Stevi (the artist's mother) with her girlfriends on a school trip in Sardinina, Aitolokarnania, Greece (1966).







Not too much at all

Every morning I go for a long walk, usually in the forest and every night I smoke a last cigarette in my little alpine smoking balcony, conveniently attached to the kitchen that leads into my working space here in Celerina. I rushed to create a routine for myself, wake up-breakfast-walk-think-lunch-work-dinner-work-sleep. Perhaps as a person born and bred in the center of the city I am afraid of feeling that I have nothing to do here in this remote village on the top of the Alps. Of course the idea of having nothing to do is just an illusion. The altitude is giving me vivid dreams, I don't paint my dreams (even though I paint of dreams) but I write them down often.

A DREAM

You came to find me at the summer house wearing a purple shirt and we slept together tight. You made a comment about my hair and how it looks next to my face and then we went for coffee. We saw my young mother and father, they were going shopping and they were holding a terrarium with a light blue butterfly inside. The butterfly was also a bird and my sibling.

I came to the Engadin valley for the first time about four years ago. My father had just died and my friend invited me here for a few days, to change my views. It was good for me, and then I somehow kept coming back. Now I am staying here for a month leaving the Greek midsummer behind for the snow-caped mountain tops. The high altitudes make one breath in a different way; see in a different way perhaps. There is no time to be bored or sad, no time to think about oneself in this place. Effortlessly selfless, is a way to describe it. I find it difficult to write, my writing is very personal and the mountains are teaching me to be part of the time passing rather than being the center of my own limited universe. The sky is changing all the time, clouds are going faster, the mountain feels heavy above; the edges of time and space are blending, and together with the influence of the senses create a new, weightless way of reading the world.

One day, another friend, took me for my first mushroom hunting in the forest. The same evening he told me a story about children looking for lost tiny diamonds amongst wooden boards. I have an ongoing collection of pictures I take of tiny stars that I sometimes find on the streets. I even took one here, in Celerina. Being aware. My friend in Athens has a tiny clear diamond touching her skin all the time, upon instructions of her acupuncturist; a barely there, beautiful necklace. Connections. Through my paintings and drawings I try to connect thoughts and ideas and impressions that I would not be able to describe and that is why I compare them to dreams. There are stories inside us all. My stories are of libraries, the city, remote islands, extraterrestrial beings, homes, the sun shining through holes in a stone wall, second thoughts and third thoughts, a community that is wet and fluid in feeling and tight in love and compassion, of floating alone for days. The mountain, the forest, my friends here and the slight absence of oxygen are adding (or taking away?) from this, and I still drift in this universe happily,

Sofia Stevi, Celerina, August 2016

Biography

Sofia Stevi was born in Athens in 1982. After studying and living in London for ten years she returned to Athens in 2013 and set up her studio there, where she paints, sculpts, makes furniture and books. Stevi has exhibited in the UK, Greece, Italy, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland. She co-founded the artist-run space Fokidos in 2013, where she continues to host exhibitions, happenings and residencies with international and Greek artists. She started *Friary Road House* poetry press and sometimes she writes.

List of Works

A Heart-Opening Sequence, 2016, ink and guache on paper, 29.7 x 21 cm

Dancing Stone, 2016, ink on paper, 29.7 x 21 cm

Cyprus Drawing 1, 2016, ink on paper, 29.7 x 21 cm

Aphrodite's Bath Routine, 2016, ink on paper, 29.7 x 21 cm

Published on the occasion of:

sofia stevi, tell me if I am too much

ALMA ZEVI, Lendi Projects, Celerina, CH

7th - 21th August, 2016

Special thanks to: Marie-Rose Kahane and David Landau; Mario Angeles, Esmeralda Botelho, Cosima Bucarelli, Francesca Crudo, Ayala and Mat Gill, David Hrankovic, Simsa and Pietro Melloni, and Margarida Oliveirra.