

Sofia Smolenskaya

Selected Works 2022 - 2024

# CV

Sofia Smolenskaya  
B. 1995 in St Petersburg, Russia  
Based in Basel and Zurich, Switzerland

## Education

2021 - present	Master of Fine Arts Zürcher Hochschule der Künste
2014 - 2020	Specialist in Graphic Art St. Petersburg Repin Academy of Fine Arts
2010 - 2014	Artist St. Petersburg State Art Lyceum of Russian Academy of Fine Arts

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2024	<i>Conditioner</i> MFA Project Space, ZHdK Zurich, Switzerland
2023	<i>Winter Auction</i> Exhibition & Auction Department of Fine Arts and Foundation ZHdK Zurich, Switzerland
2023	<i>Wonky and Skewed</i> Exhibition at Nest, Toni Areal Zurich, Switzerland
2022	<i>Winter Auction</i> Exhibition & Auction Department of Fine Arts and Foundation ZHdK Zurich, Switzerland
2022	<i>Through the Open</i> MFA Project Space, ZHdK Zurich, Switzerland
2021	<i>A Tasting of Sweet Pleasures</i> Public Event and Publication Launch "Velvet Kisses" Material Zurich, Switzerland
2016	<i>The Common Place</i> Peresvetov Pereulok Gallery Moscow, Russia

# STATEMENT

Having been born in Russia immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union and raised during the authoritarian regime that followed, I developed an inherent curiosity and inclination to investigate transitional periods, social dynamics, and the intricate process of exchanges within society. Currently, I primarily work with ceramics, although my academic background often influences my line sketching, which takes on various forms as it emerges from the mediums I use. Through clay sculptures, drawings, and photographs, I depict specific objects that hold profound significance to me and resonate with the values, histories, and memories of my own family, as well as the broader collective. These objects can range from tranquil gardens and urban details to banal electronic devices and household appliances. Each chosen subject matter serves as a conduit, a visual portal to access the layers of narratives that intertwine with personal experiences and collective stories, creating a space for empathy and compassion.

## Contacts

+41 78 218 81 22  
sofia.smolenskaya@gmail.com  
<https://www.instagram.com/sofia.smolenskaya/>

## *Silentium*

Glazed ceramic sculpture, metal hooks, paper

45 x 18 x 26 cm

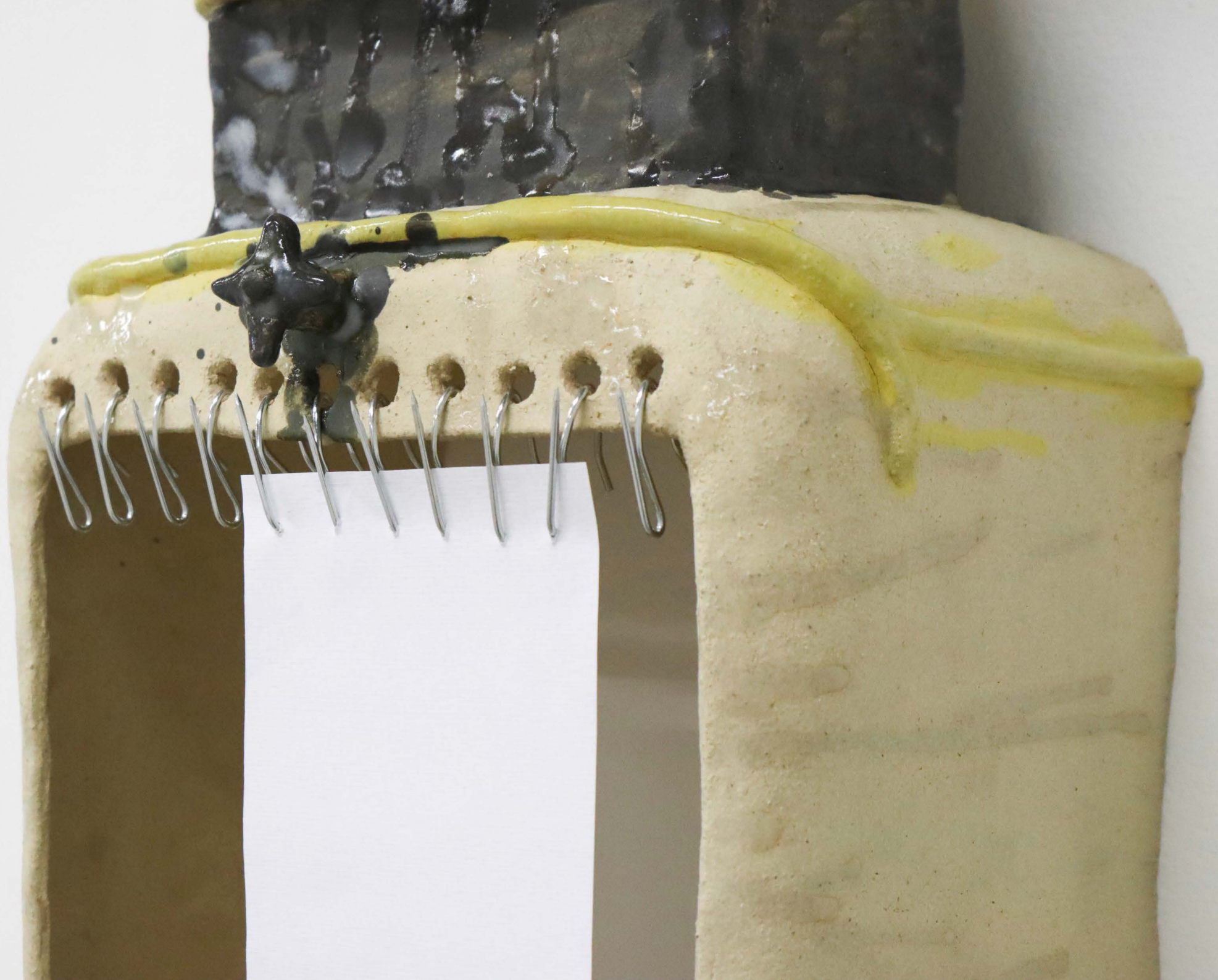
2024

Ongoing series

The primary source of references for the series stems from a collection of peculiar images and schemes extracted from a Soviet housekeeping book that emerges as a poignant relic of the Stalinist era. That historical housekeeping guide tells rules about using electronic and energy-powered tools as well as other home-related concerns. Those schemes get a human touch through ceramics, surpassing historical influences, breathing life into outdated devices, and transforming them into engaging conduits for dialogue among individuals who have become estranged. To further enrich the narrative, other found materials are infused on the surfaces of the ceramic objects. By merging crafts and functionality, objects seek to invite viewers into a thought-provoking realm where the past, present, and future converge in an exchange, questioning the ability to move beyond apparent dead ends.









## *Silentium, Antennas*

3 glazed ceramic sculptures, 6 metal hooks

30 x 10 cm each

2023

Ongoing series









## *See How Much Love is in His Eyes*

Glazed ceramic drawings  
165 x 120 cm each  
2023 - present  
Ongoing series

In order to establish a connection between the past and the present, creation and destruction, this project is based on personal memory and modern communication technologies. It consists of works from an ongoing series comprising flat, slightly billowy ceramic sheets. These sheets feature images drawn with glazes, inspired by my grandmother's WhatsApp conversations. She frequently sends me photos taken in and around her house, where I also lived as a child. The descriptions accompanying the pictures in the text messages now serve as titles for the works.

The sheets are hung on the wall in a manner that emphasizes the spaces in between, which play a central role and influence the appearance of the images. As a result, the artwork is movable and transportable, consisting of many small pieces that could be covered with a soft material and packed into a suitcase.

The bonding material used forms an invisible structure with breaks and cracks, reflecting the concept of inner immigration and fragility of communication.







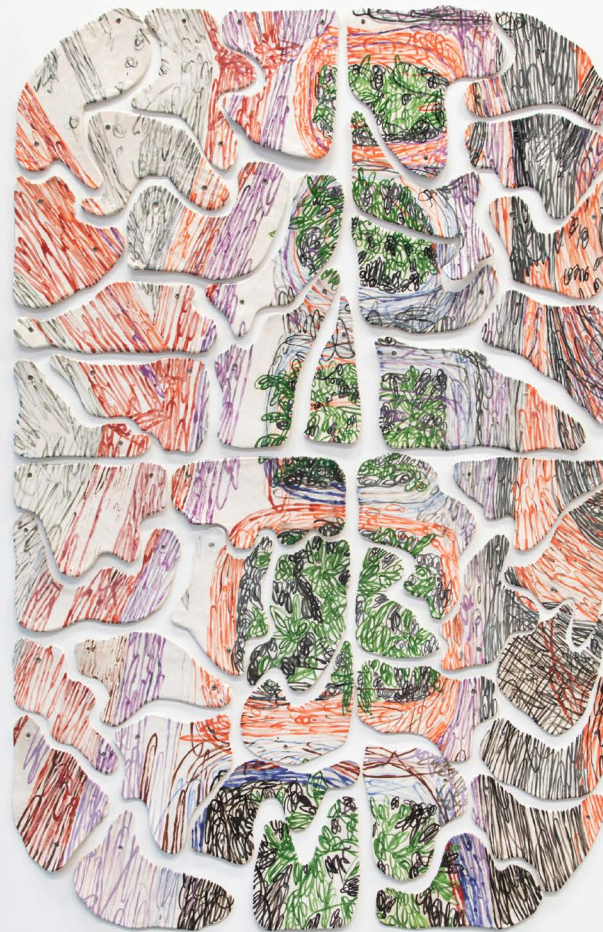
# *This is My Window Garden*

Glazed ceramic drawing

165 x 120 cm

2023

Ongoing series









## *I.A.'s Birthday*

Glazed ceramic drawing

165 x 120 cm

2023

Ongoing series









## *Gingerbread Memorial*

9 glazed ceramics

20 x 13 cm, 23 x 21 cm, 30 x 21 cm, 15 x 16 cm, 27 x 18 cm,

11 x 11 cm, 14 x 11 cm, 29 x 17 cm, 39 x 21 cm

2022

Certain events mark a clear division in one's life, separating it into a "before" and "after" phase, and these events may lead to a newfound significance to photographs taken before the occurrence. Familiar places depicted in older photographs appear either distinct or oppressively unchanged.

These drawings are based on the photographs, allowing for a tactile and perceptual exploration of every detail, such as individual blades of grass or the texture of the roads. However, these details remain visually obscured and devoid of color. Instead, these renderings are presented as fragmented memories or nonexistent apparitions reminiscent of gingerbread creations or souvenirs one might find in a tourist-oriented shop.













## *Firefly*

Glazed ceramic sculpture

40 x 45 x 37 cm

2022

A ceramic object explores concepts of communication and home. The initial references were an old, small black-and-white TV from the USSR found in an attic of an old house and popular songs from the 90s, which transformed into a creature that feels more alive than a distant memory. "An Inconvenient Past" is the name of a book by Nikolai Eppe, where the author shows how different countries in the 20th century tried to overcome historical trauma. There were some small attempts in the 90s to create a dialogue in society about the crimes of the USSR, but it all ended at the very beginning. Now, the monsters from the past have become more alive than ever, and establishing a dialogue in an oppressed society is an extremely complex task. However, non-violent communication remains the only answer, and this object symbolizes a possible safe space where such a dialogue could happen.





