

# GALLERY OF HEROIC WOMEN

Myriam Thyès, 2018 – 2019. Series of portraits; edited stills from movies.  
C-prints on oval aluminium plates, 55 x 45 cm each, placed in front of a printed textile wallpaper.

This series of fictitious portraits deals with fighting and hunting movie heroines and refers to the baroque concept of the ‚Gallery of Heroic Women‘ (book by Pierre Le Moine with illustrations, painting series by Guy François, and others, 16th–17th century). During this period, in European art and literature, an intensive debate about „female“ virtues, fortitude and excellence took place.

Why are there so many female protagonists in today's movies and (tv) film series who fight, shoot, hunt, kill? Who are their creators, who their fans? Who are their role models, for whom are they role models? I'm fascinated by characters like Katniss from The Hunger Games who melds qualities of Jeanne d'Arc and of a revolutionary, and by Sigourney Weaver in the Alien movies. The latter is an action heroine who commiserates with other humans and sacrifices herself for humanity. But Uma Thurman as revenger in Kill Bill and Arya Stark in Game of Thrones cannot be explained with such noble ambitions. Are their characters about emancipation and equality, or about assertiveness, efficiency and optimizing themselves? Or are these strong and partially brutal women – once again – simply angels and demons, created by male phantasies? In any case, these heroines have to perform all virtues formerly split among female and male characters.

Most of these 19 portraits look at the viewer. In ancient times, such gazes painted on bucklers or protective shields, were supposed to impress the adversary and hold demons off. The „ocean“ of workout devices on which these portraits are placed refers to the pressure to perform the actresses are subdued.

In the exhibition B.A.R.O.C.K. at Caputh Palace near Potsdam (2019), 12 images served as female counterparts of the portraits of the Twelve First Roman Emperors. (The castle was built for the electress and later used as a hunting lodge.) In the exhibition ARTISTS' CONQUEST in Pillnitz Palace, Dresden (2021), they were placed above busts of former rulers of Saxony.





Installation in the exhibition B.A.R.O.C.K. at Caputh Palace, 2019. Antechamber of the Elector, with portrait gallery of the first 12 Roman Emperors, and with 13 „Heroic Women“.



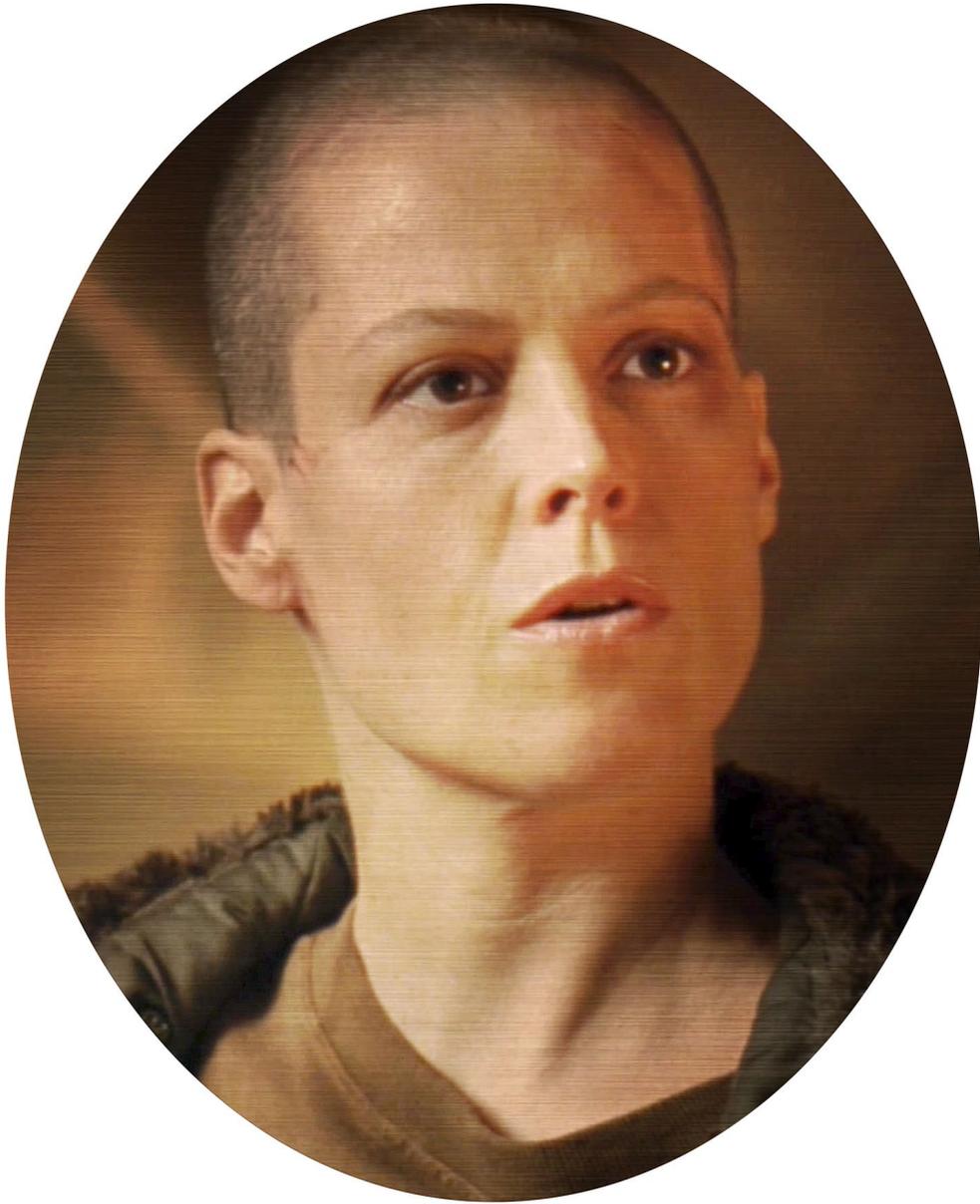
Installation in solo exhibition at Kunstmuseum Ahlen (Westfalen), June - August 2019. Here, 17 images are placed in front of the wall hanging.



The Hunger Games, Katniss Everdeen



Strange Days, Lornetta „Mace“ Mason



Alien 3, Ellen Ripley



The Matrix, Trinity



Kill Bill, Beatrix Kiddo



James Bond - Casino Royale, M



Black Panther, General Okoye



Tomb Raider, Lara Croft



Lola Rennt, Lola



Wonder Woman, Diana



Natural Born Killers, Mallory Knox



Terminator 2, Sarah Connor



Species, SIL



Dangerous Liaisons, Isabelle de Merteuil



The River Wild, Gail Hartman



Avatar, Neytiri



Game of Thrones, Arya Stark



Resident Evil, Alice