

## PUTIN'S BLOODBATH

Artist: Debbie Davies

When I opened LiTE-HAUS, I had an unfriendly neighbor. She is an elderly woman with a grumpy attitude. I had a nickname for her - "GDR". My Russian-born husband - Dmitrii - insisted she was ex-KGB. We would laugh every time we saw her getting into everyone's business.

She took care of the garden sometimes, which was nice. But often she put silly figurines and ugly plastic flowers there. She also put plastic flowers in a basket on a small table outside her apartment door. I know this because I eventually rented an apartment above her. The flowers and ribbons were covered in dust, and the table was a piece of junk.

During the pandemic, she moved. I was happy about that. But she left behind the small table with the plastic flowers. I did not like seeing them every time I passed by. So one morning I took it all down to the trash. However, I thought maybe I will keep just the wicker basket. It could be cleaned and used for an art project.

In the galerie kitchen, I pulled out the plastic flowers from the basket, and something hard and small fell out. I looked down, and there was a small white figurine, face down. I picked it up and turned it over to see Putin's face!

I was shocked. I laughed so hard. My Ukrainian and Russian friends tell me that some old people believe in some spiritual nonsense, and these figurines are what they use for spells or a talisman.

It was especially ironic for me to find this, since I worked with Ukrainian activists. Some years ago I participated in a demonstration here in Berlin on behalf of Ukraine. I remember how surprised I was at the thousands of Russians who attended - supporting Putin. My group had police protection. I recall the rage in the faces of some of the Russians who yelled and spat at us. I thought "Why are they living in Berlin if they love Russia so much?"

When I showed the little Putin bust to Dmitrii, he of course said "I told you! I was right!"

I kept the Putin bust, thinking someday I would do something with it. So this is my own form of witchcraft, I think. He'll forever live in this pickle jar, surrounded in a bloody haze. Slava Ukraini.