

TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY

Live Forever

24 October - 30 November 2019

Tim Van Laere Gallery presents Live Forever, a group show with work by Bram Demunter, Gelatin, Adrian Ghenie, Kati Heck, Friedrich Kunath, Edward Lipski, Jonathan Meese, Tal R, Daniel Richter, Peter Rogiers, Ben Sledsens, Ed Templeton, Henk Visch and Anke Weyer.

The paintings and drawings of Bram Demunter (°1993 Kortrijk; lives and works in Knokke-Heist) are always an interactive process between things he reads, hears, sees and thinks. He developed a very own iconography that closely resembles a premodern visual language and image of man. He combines this with elements from modern abstract expressionist painting. With this he refers to the tradition of art history with references to Gerard David, James Ensor, Henry Darger and Rogier Van der Weyden. His works always revolve around the behavior of people and their interaction with each other and their environment, such as nature, animals and institutions, touching on "raw" human emotions.

The artist collective Gelatin (living and working in Vienna) is composed of four artists. They met for the first time in 1978 during their participation in a summer camp. Since then they play and work together. One can define their universe as an enormous extravagant chaos. Their work stems from their performances and mainly translates into sculptures. The work of the Viennese collective, which consists of performances, installations, plasticine paintings & collages, watercolors, furniture, sculptures, etc., is always characterized by infectious, childish enthusiasm and focuses on creating new hedonistic and physical experiences. They encourage the public to participate and contribute something with their ideas. Their work often deals with the body that functions as a collective language.

At first sight Adrian Ghenie's (°1977, Baia-Mare; lives and works in Cluj and Berlin) paintings deal with subjects that carry a historical set of references, but collective memory is constantly challenged by enigmatic prophetic actions, occulted and personal folds in the temporal linearity. Ghenie's works have become increasingly complex and multilayered, generating an open-ended set of internal and external meanings. Infused with ambiguity, the works operate in the areas between figuration and abstraction, history and imagination, past and present.

Kati Hecks (° 1979, Düsseldorf; lives and works in Pulle) masterful virtuosity is unmistakable. She portrays her figures in a photorealistic way with a great attention to every detail. She combines that precision with abstractions and parts that are applied almost sculpturally on canvas. With her works, Heck synthesizes different styles, combining elements from expressionism and surrealism with social realism. Her works are reminiscent of the bars, dancers and actors of Otto Dix and George Grosz, but also refer to Jean-Michel Basquiat, the Dada movement, Man Ray and the Old Masters. She brings painting to a whole new level, as a gesture in the direction of free, radical self-confirmation.

Friedrich Kunath's (°1974 Chemnitz; lives and works in Los Angeles) work is imbued with ambiguity. His work has been influenced by the culture of wisdom and popular culture, to the point of obsession and sometimes even systematization. His personal journey from East to West Berlin, to his new home in Los Angeles, presented Kunath with a wide range of source material, ranging from the canon of art history and German philosophy to the idiom of kitsch and the make-believe world of Hollywood and Los Angeles. Kunath's work is about the universal themes of human existence, such as love, loss, optimism, vulnerability and melancholy. His oeuvre includes various media, from painting, sculpture, drawing, video and photography to extensive installations, all with tragicomic pathos and dreams about possibilities.

Spirituality and existential discomfort in human existence, and the rituals with which man tries to relate to it, are recurring themes in the work of Edward Lipski (°1966, London; lives and works in London). "My work is between the cultural and visual level," explains Edward Lipski, "I am interested in the space between something you immediately understand and something abstract. This confusion creates a certain intensity." Lipski's work moves between these two poles. The distance between the extremes has faded, until we find ourselves immersed in a seductive visual chaos.

Jonathan Meese (°1970, Tokyo; lives and works in Berlin and Hamburg) is known for his versatile work, ranging from exuberant paintings, installations, ecstatic performances to a powerful oeuvre of sculptures in various media. All of Meese's work is driven and supported by the pursuit of the dictatorship of art. Apparently effortlessly, he developed an independent and unique vocabulary in all genres that gives his work the diversity, visual energy and quality that, according to Robert Fleck, has been unseen since Picasso.

The duality of Tal R's (°1967 Tel Aviv, Israel; lives and works in Copenhagen) heritage is recognized in his work, which offers both festive and sinister sensations. His subject is deliberately easy to describe, but meaning is, as in dreams, enigmatic. Tal works with different media (collage, sculpture, installation, painting) and intuitively removes images from different sources. Historical and art-historical references are abundant: threads of expressionism, fauvism and symbolism continue, as well as a nod to traditional Scandinavian art, art nouveau and art from outsiders or children.

Daniel Richter (°1962, Eutin, Germany; lives and works in Berlin) creates a balance between abstraction and figuration with a combination of highly detailed silhouettes and subtle gradations of the background. In his large-scale oil paintings, Richter connects pieces of art history, mass media and pop culture in idiosyncratic, narrative pictorial worlds. Undercurrents of violence, isolation and clumsiness are indicated by a picturesque language that deals with both absurdity and surrealism. The tension in Richter's large-scale compositions is reinforced by the colors and shapes that he uses and gives the work a playful quality. Richter argues that the dichotomy between abstract and figurative painting is a constructed fiction, because the formal problems of color and composition remain constant. The symbolist painter James Ensor and the pioneer of expressionism, Edvard Munch, can be seen here as Richter's artistic ancestors.

Peter Rogier's (°1967, Antwerp; lives and works in Oud-Heverlee) ironic-expressive sculptures float between abstraction and figuration and combine both excellent craftsmanship and innovative visual language. The work of Peter Rogiers is characterized by numerous contradictions. With his characteristic sense of humor, a large dose of (self) irony and exceptional artisanal qualities, Rogiers challenges the conventions of traditional art history by removing them from their typical contexts and introducing them into a new visual language in which the psychology of form is constantly central.

Ben Sledsens's (°1991, Antwerp; lives and works in Antwerp) works bear witness to an in-depth knowledge of art history. His palette of strong, vibrant colors, high technical qualities and simple visual language exist within a long tradition that refers to great masters such as Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, Henri Rousseau and Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Nature and daily life are also important sources of inspiration for Sledsens. His large-scale canvases seem deceptively simple due to the naive visual language and very recognizable subjects, but behind this lies a strongly thought-out composition in which Sledsens brings a visual storyline into his work.

Ed Templeton (°1972, Garden Grove; lives and works in Huntington Beach) spent his childhood in a world of skateboarding and punk rock music. He described his drawings, photos and paintings based on anecdotes and feelings that give the images a new, more profound interpretation. Human vulnerability is also an important theme in Templeton's paintings and drawings. This is especially true for the works populated by zombie-like human figures, who seem to have escaped from a medieval tableau of the Last Judgment. Templeton's early skate fame gave him a forum to discuss issues such as racism and homophobia that didn't get much room in the skateboard subculture. He played a pioneering role in leading skateboarding to the creative and cultural influence it has today.

With his poetic sculptures, Henk Visch (°1950 Eindhoven; lives and works in Eindhoven and Berlin) often manages to evoke all kinds of associations and stimulate the viewer's fantasy. In Visch's awareness there is both joy and pain. It contains raw material to play with and, even more, to work with so as to embody and stage, in a way that is familiar and secret, harrowing and full of leaps, some "truths" about our sexuality, our desires and our terrors, our arabesques and our collective gesticulations, our constant approximations, or, in short, our tribulations in space with the body as the vehicle: real bodies, invented bodies, those of known and utopian reigns.

Dismantling false dichotomies such as abstraction versus figuration, accident versus intention and confusion versus order, Anke Weyer (°1974 Karlsruhe; lives and works in New York) has developed a practice where anything is possible, where confusion is as marvellous as it is treacherous. Uninhibited and instinctively Anke Weyer paints with a certain urgency, a speed that keeps the painted picture honest and pure. Speed triumphs over composition. Her compositional choices are made in the moment, very consciously or impulsive, each decision has a different meaning and magnitude. The paintings document Weyer's proces: applying layers of paint, taking paint off, overpainting it again. Using energetic brush marks, drips, wipes and scrubbing, she develops a flux of forms and lines.