

JOHANNES KAHRS

SLEEP

Massimo De Carlo presents *Sleep*, the first solo exhibition by the German artist Johannes Kahrs - now represented by the gallery.

Perception's analysis and images' manipulation are at the core of Johannes Kahrs' reflection. The subjects of the German author's artworks present themselves in all their human indecipherability, shaken by pressures and malaise: the monstrous yet familiar realism of Kahrs' paintings provokes entangled empathy and reveals the hidden and violent side of humanity. Starting from images collected from magazines, the internet, newspapers, advertisements, amateur and feature films, but also from photographs taken by himself, Johannes Kahrs releases the image from its original context, depicting fragmented and isolated scenes and escaping a coherent narrative. By cutting the image, enlarging its details and disconnecting it from its original embedded context, the artist emphasizes the symbolic meaning of the scene to reveal its deeper and mysterious contents.

Sleep collects artworks from the last three years, whose recurring theme is the portrait and the representation of human body, a theme that has always been central in Kahrs' artistic practice, but which is here characterized by a greater essentiality and a less direct reference to collective imagery than in the past - in *Sleep* the corporality is sectioned with fetishistic care.

The exhibition takes its title from a series of works from 2019, based on some photographs taken by the artist in several airports around the world: in *Sleep* (2019) and *Sleep Man* (2019), Johannes Kahrs portrays sleeping businessmen, with a flashy pink complexion, meek and unwitting, annihilated by everyday life. The German painter associates them with images of pigs: the episode that originates the image gives the change to define a general existential condition and evokes a feeling of vagueness and restlessness. These two paintings are also illustrative of the artist's attitude to often return to the same subject and isolate fragments of his other artworks. The reclining position of the three men in *Sleep* creates a bridge with the work *Black sand* (2018), in which the lying body seems to float on the surface of the canvas, largely occupied by a concealing dark background.

Johannes Kahrs' reflection speaks through the formal composition of his works, the colours' selection and the allegedly fuzzy essence of his brushstrokes, blurred and bright, dark and iridescent, vague yet precise. In *Grapes* (2019) and *Nose mouth eye* (2017), the artist questions the meaning of representation by deepening not only the idea of photography as source of figuration, but also how the subject relates to the camera and can break the barrier of the lens. *Jockey* (2017), for example, shows a man that seems to escape the indiscreet gaze of the observer and the artist, triggering a reaction of concern and tension.

The fragmentary representation of the human body is another central theme of Johannes Kahrs' work: in *Man* (2019), *Man double* (2019) and *Junge am meer* (2020) the bodies lose their legibility due to the unconventional use of perspective, framing, focus and the headless figures require us to look for the profound significance of the paintings where we would not be driven, out of habit, to look at.

With his work, Johannes Kahrs challenges our beliefs and our ability to observe what surrounds us. Through his pictorial practice, the artist fights the hectic and superficial representation of human body in times of mass communication and out-of-control sharing. Johannes Kahrs questions reality by revealing its physicality, perturbation and its violent sensuality.

{ MDC }

WWW.MASSIMODECARLO.COM

MASSIMODECARLO

JOHANNES KAHRS

Johannes Kahrs was born in Bremen, Germany, in 1965. He lives and works in Berlin. Solo exhibitions have been held in prominent institutions such as: Hall Art Foundation | Schloss Derneburg Museum, Derneburg (2020); FRAC Île-de-France, Paris (2016); Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg (2014); Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (2013); CentrePasquArt, Biel (2012); GAMEC, Bergamo (2007); Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London (2006); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2002). His show *A-h* has been held in Kunstverein München, Munich (2001); FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou (2001); S.M.A.K., Ghent (2001). His work has been included in group shows at: Grand Palais, Paris (2018); National Portrait Gallery, London (2018); Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (2010); SFMoMA, San Francisco (2009); Caixa Forum, Barcelona (2010); FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand (2016, 2010; 2008, 2006); National Museum of Poznan, Poznan (2014), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2006), amongst others. He participated in the Lyon Biennial, Lyon (2015); Mediations Biennial, Poznan (2014); Taipei Biennial, Taipei (2002); and Manifesta, San Sebastian (2004). Work by the artist is held in major museum collections such as: Centre Pompidou, Paris; MOCA, Los Angeles; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; Museu Serralves, Porto; SFMoMA, San Francisco; UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; MoMA, New York and S.M.A.K., Ghent.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, London
55 South Audley Street, London W1K 2QH
From November 25, 2020

Open by appointment only

For further information and materials:

Press Office, Massimo De Carlo
T. +39 02 70003987 - T. +44 (0) 20 7287 2005
press@massimodecarlo.com
www.massimodecarlo.com
Instagram: massimodecarlogallery #massimodecarlogallery

{ MDC }

WWW.MASSIMODECARLO.COM

55 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET - LONDON W1K 2QH - UK - T. +44 (0)20 7287 2005 - LONDON@MASSIMODECARLO.COM