

# **JONATHAN MEESE**

## **SELF PORTRAITS AND NUDES (GESAMTKUNSTWERK)**

**7 April - 14 May 2022**



Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to announce SELF PORTRAITS AND NUDES (GESAMTKUNSTWERK), Jonathan Meese's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Jonathan Meese (b. 1970 Tokyo, lives and works in Berlin and Hamburg) is renowned for his multi-faceted work, including wildly exuberant paintings, installations, ecstatic performances and a powerful body of sculptures in a variety of media. Seemingly effortless, he has developed in all genres an independent and at the same time unique vocabulary that gives his work a variety, visual energy and quality, which, according to Robert Fleck, has been unheard of since Picasso.

Meese creates an elaborate personal mythology with characters inspired by history, legends and science fiction. In his works you will find a hard to decipher system of signs, badges, neologisms, symbols and figurative allusions to all kinds of power seekers, mythical characters and geniuses from history. We recognize various pop stars and fictional heroes from novels and movies. Meese's work is also characterized by a sense of humor that tends toward both the grotesque and a powerful, original creative will, striving for a "Dictatorship of Art". What is meant by this is the development of a world order where art is the legislative power, and free play is the basis of all life and creation. This utopian approach runs like a leitmotif through Meese's work, bringing together the individual parts of his oeuvre into a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. He does not strive for anarchy, but rather for the rule of metabolic necessity under the slogan: "Art is total play".

According to Meese, this exhibition celebrates "the birth of the Gesamtkunstwerk." He presents a series of new works that captures the interplay of inner and outer worlds, combining the phantasmagoria of the imagination with the bric-à-brac of everyday reality. He equates art with osmosis. His paintings are filled with photosynthesis and mimicry, which allow us to enter an alternative universe. The self-portraits and nudes point out that all self-portraits are naked, and all nudes are self-portraits. One finds the childhood of everything, with the ultimate self-portrait being the embryo. This theme is aptly visualized in the large-scale painting TOTAL RECALL (THE R.I.P.-DIDDLOIDEN ARE BACK TO FIGHT THE "KAMPF UM KUNST (BIRTH OF GESAMTKUNSTWERK)). The artist pays homage to evolution, nature, love, power, collage, abstraction, animalism and art itself, with special references to the following artists or "Spielkinder": Van Gogh, Fidus, Warhol, Dali, Picasso, Balthus, Barbarella, Pippi Longstocking and Moominism.

Jonathan Meese has exhibited globally with museums and leading art galleries such as Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna; Kunstmuseum, The Hague; CAC Málaga, Málaga; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; De Appel Center for Contemporary Art, Amsterdam. His works are in numerous international collections including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Holstebro Museum, Holstebro; Louisiana-Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami; SMAK, Ghent; Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen; Taguchi Art Collection, Tokyo and Musées de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.