

**KATI HECK**  
**LEGENDE**  
**19 May-1 July 2021**



Tim Van Laere Gallery presents Kati Heck's fifth solo exhibition: *Legende* (Legend). In this exhibition, Heck shows a series of new paintings, drawings and furniture sculptures.

Heck is known for her lucid yet enigmatic paintings, in which realism is transformed from a representative category into a fluid process. The way Heck assembles her compositions remind us of the literary genre of the legend. Legends are stories that have been retold through generations, but can also be seen as deciphering tools or as something that can offer us a foothold. Every legend is based on a core of truth, but that truth has been distorted and exaggerated in a way that it has become difficult to confirm or deny the accuracy of the story. We also find a play on reality in the work of Kati Heck. Her compositions branch out into multiple genres - where literature, history, art history, science and her own lived experiences come together to form indivisible units. On a first reading they seem to reveal and explain things, but when you move into the deeper layers of her works you end up in a maze, where each step takes you deeper into the riddles of Heck's own quest. Mankind and the issues that shape our human life are always central to her work. She often borrows her subjects from her immediate environment, populating her paintings with her family, friends, neighbors and pets. Her works are reminiscent of the bars, dancers and actors of Otto Dix and George Grosz, but also refer to Jean-Michael Basquiat and the Old Masters. With her works, Heck synthesizes different styles, combining elements of expressionism and surrealism with social realism.

Recent studies have shown that the average IQ is declining in certain Western countries. For decades, the average human intelligence quotient has been rising, but that trend seems to have been reversing since the 1970s. This news sparked Heck's interest in what it would be like if we evolved back into a kind of Neanderthal. It determined the course for this exhibition. The self-portrait *Epilog*, 2021, in which she portrays herself as a Neanderthal, serves as both a prologue and an epilogue. A circular process that also symbolizes the integration and assimilation of the opposite, where the end is also the beginning. A process that we find in human evolution as well as in the evolution of origin, in aspects such as life and death, day and night. Heck's interest lies mainly in the in-between or the twilight zone. In a 1949 play, Gottfried Benn had one of his characters say: "Nicht zuviel Sonne, das Licht wird verkannt, Dämmerung ist die eigentliche Menschheitsbeleuchtung". The German word *Dämmerung* refers to the transition from night to day: the twilight zone. Also the verb "dahindämmern", describes a state of being between waking and sleeping in which we experience a different form of consciousness. This *Dämmer* state runs as a central theme throughout this exhibition, which is literally reflected in the cave scene in the large-scale painting but also figuratively in her interpretation of "the shadow." According to Carl Jung, the shadow plays a distinctive role in balancing one's overall psyche, the counterbalance to consciousness.

In the first room, Heck has placed a sculptural seating object in the shape of the moon, from where we can view the heavenly ceiling work. In the second room, Heck darkened the walls like night, in which she shows three large-scale canvases with boyish (anti)heroes (*Jungs III - Goldene Hand*, *Jungs V - Jäger und Sammler*, *Jungs IV - Haut ab Seele raus*)

Kati Heck (°1979, Düsseldorf, Germany) lives and works in Pulle. Recent solo exhibitions have included Sadie Coles HQ, London; Art Museum The Hague, The Hague; M HKA, Antwerp; Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago; CAC, Málaga; and Mary Boone Gallery, New York. Her work is part of public collections such as Center Pompidou, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (MN), USA; Hall Art Foundation, Derneburg (DE) and Reading (VT); Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris (FR); M HKA, Antwerp; CAC, Málaga; City of Antwerp; The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas, USA; Middelheim Museum, Antwerp, Belgium; Museum De Domijnen, Sittard, The Netherlands; Mu.ZEE, Ostend; Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art (S.M.A.K.), Ghent.