

# GALLERI

## NICOLAI WALLNER

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**Joachim Koester, Jonathan Monk and Maja Malou Lyse**

***Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n Roll***

**January 20, 2023 - February 25, 2023**

Galleri Nicolai Wallner is pleased to present a group exhibition with works by Joachim Koester, Jonathan Monk and Maja Malou Lyse. This marks Lyse's first exhibition with the gallery.

The phrase "sex, drugs and rock 'n roll"—made popular in 1977 by musician Ian Dury with a song of the same name—has existed for generations in one form or another. The narrative of the "sex, drugs, rock 'n roll" lifestyle references a hedonistic approach to living, one based in overindulgence, rule breaking and "too much of a good thing", a narrative that perhaps has had its day.

Moving away from the generalisations of this narrative and the stereotypical connotations behind these themes, the works in this exhibition each focus on one of these presumed vices. Joachim Koester, Jonathan Monk and Maja Malou Lyse's interpretations explore the complex cultural and political histories and contexts that underpin each of them, as they remind us of the shifting realities they encompass.

**Maja Malou Lyse** (b. 1993, Denmark) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores themes regarding the complexities of identity, body image, pleasure politics and social dynamics through an incredibly immersive practice. Lyse's sculpture *Sex is not a natural act* fills a section of the gallery floor. The sculpture's form and surface refer to that of a dildo, albeit in an exaggerated scale. At this size, it moves beyond its intended use and its more sculptural properties come to the forefront. Laying prone on its side, it's almost as if it's laying in wait for someone.

*Sex is not a natural act* eloquently questions the normative process of identification, objectification and the aesthetics of desire to underline the problematics of representation politics and power dynamics within our image consumption. The work opens itself up to larger discussions around imagery and visual content in our contemporary world. How do the images that maintain a constant presence in our lives influence the way we behave and the way we look at ourselves?

**Joachim Koester's** (b. 1962, Denmark) *Coloured Cannabis* series takes its starting point in pivotal moments in time in the history of cannabis production. The series eloquently references both the 1970s magazine *High Times* in which cannabis plants were celebrated and photographed like the centrefolds in *Playboy*, and Reagan's war on drugs in the 1980s which pushed the production and breeding of cannabis in wild, new directions—giving way to unexpected new strains and variants. In allowing the aesthetic qualities of each plant to come into focus, Koester's series reiterates these histories' physical traces. In choosing psychoactive plants with this series, Koester reminds us not only of the plants ability to alter our experiences and shift our ways of thinking, but of arts ability to do so as well.

Carefully questioning narratives and identities, Koester's practice uses the medium of photography to explore the ways in which our shared stories are established, and in the process questions how these mediums are, ultimately, ambiguous.

**Jonathan Monk's** (b. 1969, UK) three works each feature a car hood mounted on the wall. Each is immaculately painted in the likeness of a pop star—in this case, Grace Jones, Iggy Pop and Jimi Hendrix. The glossy quality of the surface and the angular bends of the hood create a dynamic effect that almost seem to interact with you as you walk past. This nod to intense idolatry and worship is playful while also underlining the power these figures have in our lives.

Monk has long been fascinated with pop stars and art stars alike. His practice takes on questions of originality, authorship, and the role of the artist. Using aesthetic elements and conceptual principles most frequently associated with the classical era of conceptual art—the beginning of the 1960s through the late 1970s—Jonathan Monk's works often directly take on the artists who have come before him, his contemporary peers and occasionally also himself.