

Lenz Geerk

Moonpaintings

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MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce *Moonpaintings*, Lenz Geerk's first personal exhibition at Casa Corbellini-Wassermann in Milan.

Marking Lenz Geerk's first solo exhibition at MASSIMODECARLO, *Moonpaintings* explores intimate, alienated worlds inhabited by pensive, dreamy figures bathed in moonlight. Placed in melancholic, timeless surroundings, Geerk's gleaming moon brightens the natural landscape acting as a comforting yet inquiring presence. The moon becomes a continuum in the series, connecting each painting to the next, guarding the figures as it bathes them in its cold radiant glow.

Discussing this new body of work, Geerk revealed his newfound fascination, almost obsession with the moon: "the moon has become such a kitsch object that it is almost a bit discomfoting to paint it. If something is discomfoting, I love to paint it".

Whist drawn to its contemporary representations, the artist also references the iconography of German Romanticism, which captured nature and light in all its sublime grandeur. In this new body of work, Geerk renders nature in a dark and composed manner, conveying a sense of wilderness. Geerk's landscapes feature sparse trees with gnarled branches and softly curved and densely tinted country glades. While minimal in its representation, Geerk's portrayal of nature is sometimes drawn from lived moments. In *Moonpainting II*, the artist reminisces about environmental protests that saw activists building homes and living on trees to stop the tearing down of Hambach Forest in western Germany. "That was such a beautiful image that connected us with nature, allowing us to come back from where we came from," explains Geerk.

At times on their own, at times together, Geerk's figures permeate a sense of nostalgia, estrangement and emotional turmoil. The androgynous and anonymous faces depicted by the artist effortlessly portray a humanity that is psychologically exposed. Willingly blurring skin colours and features, the artist draws relatable figures, establishing a direct relationship with the viewer.

Moving sensuously yet wildly on the canvas, the characters exude a contemporary ennui that materialises in a muted colour palette.

Pastel pinks and muddy blues are intermittently dominated by vivid reds and lavishly coloured flowers and fruits, infusing a sense of intrigue and ambiguity. In *Moonpainting XI*, an enigmatic barefoot male figure picks an intensely lit red cherry, which becomes a focal point in the composition. Its colour and minuteness attract the viewer's attention towards the figure's mouth and fingertips. Captivating and gloomy, the moon is both a comforting spectator, and a watchful presence over the character's psychological vagaries and apparent isolation.

Intruding into his characters' lives and thoughts, the moon has a dual role in the exhibition, as both the observer and the observed subject. Whether placed on its own, at the forefront of fictional landscapes or in the backdrop of ambiguous scenes, the moon's gaze underpins the entire exhibition.

The apparent disregard for privacy in Geerk's intimate compositions does not seem to disturb his subjects. Distractedly watching over her shoulder, the female figure in *Moonpainting XII* accompanies the viewer's attention towards her body while concealing her eyes from the moon. Observed from the back and the front, the figure is infused with a sense of calm acceptance, almost soothed by her spectators' gaze.

The twelve moon paintings in Casa Corbellini-Wassermann nod to the lunar year and its twelve phases. Revealing the passage of time in the night sky, Geerk's moons - whether full, crescent or just a sliver of silvery light - become a repository of longing and desire, a witness of secret relationships and unspoken words.

Lenz Geerk was born in 1988 in Basel, Switzerland; He lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Lenz Geerk depicts captivating yet disquieting compositions reminiscent of 20th-century artists. Particularly drawn from the metaphysical and surrealist movements, Geerk, in his work, is also echoing German Romanticism and its inspiring pastel colours. Combining these European influences and the unique use of acrylic paint and layering, Geerk showcases a technique that is recognisably his own.

Although Geerk's compositions exude a sense of intimacy as if they were memories from lived experiences, they emerge from the unconscious - dreams of daily life. Geerk's figures are captured in subtle moments, hesitantly existing in limbo - neither in the fictional realm nor in reality. Poised in moments of sublime ennui, the characters, with their meditative postures and still gestures, expose the human psyche and an emotional turmoil that is incredibly contemporary.

The anxiety and distress that pervade Geerk's figures are also reflected in the nearly monochromatic, muted colour palette that occasionally is warmed by other colours and that heightens the air of mystery and emotional discomfort. Geerk explores and exposes introversion, intimacy and togetherness through this veil of ambiguity and soft haziness.

Solo exhibitions have been held at Roberts Projects, Los Angeles (2022; 2019; 2018); Galleria Acappella, Napoli (2018); The Cabin, Los Angeles (2018); and Galeria Mascota, Mexico City (2017). His work has been included in recent group shows at The Perimeter, London (2022); MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique, Paris (2022; 2021); Le Consortium, Dijon (2022); MASSIMODECARLO, Milano (2021); GRIMM, Amsterdam (2021); Spruth Magers OVR (2021); Almine Rech, New York (2021); Hussenet Galerie, Paris (2021); Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate (2021); Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, New York (2020); and Maximillian William, London (2019).

Lenz Geerk's work is held in the public collections of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA; The Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland; Kistefos Museum, Oslo, Norway; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL, USA; Comico Art Museum, Oita, Japan; XIAO Museum, Shandong, China; Up Next Art, Vega Baja, Puerto Rico; The Arts Club Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates; ICD Brookfield Place, DIFC, Dubai, United Arab Emirates; X Museum, Shanghai, China.