

JONATHAN MEESE
A.R.T. IS TOTAL "FAMILY-BUSINESS"!
AGRIPPINA=ARTMOTHERZ
NERO=ARTSOLDIER
(CÄSAREN-ROULETTE, NO PROBLEM, YEAH)
10 February - 27 April 2024

Tim Van Laere Gallery Rome is pleased to present A.R.T. IS TOTAL "FAMILY BUSINESS"!, AGRIPPINA=ARTMOTHERZ, NERO=ARTSOLDIER (CÄSAREN-ROULETTE, NO PROBLEM, YEAH). This is the sixth solo show of Jonathan Meese since joining Tim Van Laere Gallery in 2011 and his first show in our Roman space.

Jonathan Meese (b. 1970, Tokyo, lives and works in Berlin and Ahrensburg) is known for his versatile oeuvre, which includes exuberant paintings, extravagant installations and ecstatic performances, writings, as well as a powerful body of sculptures in various media. With its rich and personal mythology, bursting with symbols, neologisms and metaphors, the artist's multi-faceted work arouses fascination. Seemingly effortlessly, Meese manages to distinguish himself in each genre with an independent and unique vocabulary that allows his works to exude a visual energy, which, according to curator Robert Fleck, is unparalleled since Picasso. All of Meese's works share a humor tending towards the grotesque, as well as a powerful, original creative will. Both are driven and supported by a striving for a rule of art, the dictatorship of art. What is meant here is the development of a new world order where art is the legislative power, and free play the foundation of all life and creation. This utopian approach runs like a leitmotif through all his works and brings the individual parts of the oeuvre together to form the Jonathan Meese Gesamtkunstwerk. He does not aim at anarchy, but rather the rule of metabolic necessity: "Art is total play".

For his solo exhibition at *Palazzo Donarelli Ricci*, Jonathan Meese draws inspiration from the powerful imperial dynasties of Ancient Rome. He presents paintings, drawings, sculptures, manifestos and a video all dealing with various prototypes of Caesars, their families, their surroundings and their actions and behaviour. He shows images of Agrippina, Nero, Caligula, Drusilla, Commodus, Galba, Julius Caesar, Claudius, Tiberius, Nero's cat, Agrippina's dog, Caesarion, Cleopatra, gladiators, etcetera. The whole exhibition is Gesamtkunstwerk Italia, Gesamtkunstwerk Rome, Gesamtkunstwerk Total Empire of Art and is a declaration of love for old Roman History. The show is a total collage and Meese plays with all objects and images. He puts them into new relationships, like an art puppet-master. Meese claims "I am also just a caesar of art, like all artists, and I put myself into the scenery and into the role, like being a player in total cosplay and disguise-adventures. In art all disguises and all role-playing games are allowed, needed and accepted, there is no limit. Art is total freedom, we are allowed to play with everything, to use everything and to transform everything. Censorship should be forbidden in art. Art is free and not ideology. Art is not our taste, art is evolution, art is the driving force of the future. Art is what is needed to be done, not our political or religious views. Art is no life-style, art is total metabolism. Art is no politics, art is no religion. Art is total power without ideological strength and might. We need the Gesamtkunstwerk Europe, we need the Gesamtkunstwerk planet earth, we need the Gesamtkunstwerk cosmos, the Gesamtkunstwerk universe, the Gesamtkunstwerk Big Bang, and the Gesamtkunstwerk total love. Art should rule us. Art is total leadership of love. Art will destroy all ideologies, Art is total wonderland. Art will conquer all. Art is total future. Art is total love".

Jonathan Meese has exhibited worldwide in museums and leading art galleries, including solo exhibitions at Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna; CAC Málaga, Málaga; Deichtorhallen Hamburg and Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. His works are included in numerous international collections, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna; Harald Falckenberg Collection, Hamburg; Holstebro Museum, Holstebro; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; Essl Collection, Vienna; Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami; SMAK, Ghent; Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen; Taguchi Art Collection, Tokyo and Musée d'art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg.