

<b>Exhibition</b>	<b>Magnus Gjoen</b> <i>The Grand Tour</i>
	22. March – 31. May 2024
<b>Opening</b>	Friday, 22. March 2024, 6 – 9 p.m.
<b>Opening Hours</b>	Tuesday – Friday: 1 – 6 p.m. and by appointment

Embark on a captivating journey with London and Florence-based artist **Magnus Gjoen** as he invites you to join his Grand Tour through Old Masters Europe at Galerie Elisabeth & Reinhard Hauff. Witness the treasures he brings back to 21<sup>st</sup>-century London from iconic European cities like Paris, Rome, Florence, Venice, and Versailles. This exhibition is a dazzling and exuberant showcase of Gjoen's recent works in diverse media, marking his inaugural solo show at the gallery, following his participation in the group exhibition "*Old Masters*" in 2019.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, artists and privileged young men undertook the Grand Tour through Europe, immersing themselves in the masterpieces of Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical periods. This cultural pilgrimage was considered an essential step in one's education, akin to today's Gap Year. Gjoen, having transitioned from a successful career as a fashion designer for Vivienne Westwood, presents his own modern-day Grand Tour. Exploring renowned European cultural heritage sites and their artworks, he shares his personal artistic interests with the audience.

Gjoen's creations are a harmonious blend of beauty found in people, nature, and art. Through experimental image-making, he transforms taboo and misunderstood concepts into artworks infused with 21<sup>st</sup>-century glamour. Addressing contemporary issues like mental health, war, immigration, and more, Gjoen's visually seductive works make these concerns "hiding in plain sight" visible to those willing to look.

Baroque trompe l'oeil ceilings by Tiepolo, Pietro da Cortona and François Lemoyne in Venice, Rome and Versailles fascinate Gjoen. The Baroque painting technique of trompe l'oeil ("deceive/trick the eye") has the power and energy to pull the viewer into a kind of imagined, heavenly, or extra-terrestrial space. Using modern technology Gjoen rediscovers these concepts of scale and proportions by using 3D lenticular lenses to create something breathtaking which the past masters could only dream they were technologically capable of doing. Gjoen's three collaged compositions on aluminium, gold leaf or as a large 3D lenticular works in the show, play with a multitude of pictorial elements borrowed from the Old Masters, so that Gjoen's messages become clear from their titles *Hidden in Plain Sight*, *I Saw the Sky Come Down to Meet You*, and *Heaven Lent you a Soul Earth will Lend a Grave*. These titles point out that these works have a deeper meaning but also that today's self promotion is nothing new as seen in the Nuptial Allegories and Triumph of Divine Providence that the original 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century ceiling compositions depict. With porcelain Cupid figurines updated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century where arrows are not longer strong enough to break through the technology hungry populous. One figurine throwing a grenade with 'love' written on it hoping to bomb people with love rather than destruction and hate. Another cuts barbed wire in an anti war stance. Gjoen uses the fragility of porcelain by incorporating historically important brands such as Meissen, Wedgwood and Sévres to comment on people's eagerness for destruction and war.

Florentine Renaissance portraits of dignified gentlemen waving patriotic flags, or elegantly offering an olive branch for much needed peace, can now move into our living rooms because of their updated aesthetics. Fashion elements are visible in the plastic bubble wrap which becomes a beautiful dress worn by an 18<sup>th</sup> century woman. Titled 'Thou Shalt go gently into the dark' it hints at the 'dark' vices we often pursue and also hints at our overuse of plastics.

Gjoen liberates artworks from their museum confines, bringing them into our present. They belong to us all anyway. He doesn't copy them, he uses them. He doesn't violate the perfection of every artwork that makes him stop and marvel on his Grand Tour – he adds-on some distinct 21<sup>st</sup> century features and visuals to each work he updates from distant and Old to here and Now. Come see the very pretty Neo-Classical young ladies clutching skateboards, while a small Rococo boy gets ready to take his pills – Acetaminophen and Oxycodone Hydrochloride, for chronic pain – originally seen at the Louvre in Paris. Your selfies are sure to get lots of likes on social media.

As more fashion designers like Yves Saint-Laurent, Coco Chanel, and Viktor & Rolf find a place in major museum exhibitions, the lines between art categories continue to blur. Magnus Gjoen's visionary explorations across High Art, Pop Art, Street Art, Fashion, Life-Style, and 21<sup>st</sup>-century multidimensional activism position him uniquely in the contemporary art scene. Having exhibited worldwide and acquired by collections globally, including the Haifa Museum of Art and Daimler Collection, Gjoen's collaborations with renowned porcelain manufacturer Meissen and London's prestigious Wallace Collection further showcase his influence in the art world (text: Elisabeth Hauff and Magnus Gjoen).

We cordially invite you to our opening on **Friday, March 22, 2024**, from **6 to 9 p.m.**