

ARMIN BOEHM

LUST ANGST SCHMERZ EKSTASE

KÖNIG GALERIE | NAVE

11 SEPTEMBER – 27 OCTOBER 2024

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present LUST ANGST SCHMERZ EKSTASE, a solo exhibition by Armin Boehm in the Nave of St. Agnes. This exhibition marks Boehm's debut with the gallery, featuring his latest series of paintings that delve into the tangled web of human emotions, exploring desire, fear, pain, and ecstasy through his distinctive, multilayered approach. Created between 2023 and 2024, the works explore a diverse range of motifs, from the assassination attempt on Donald Trump to the Berlin nightclub Berghain. Boehm dissects and critiques the political and social landscape through a lens that is both satirical and reflective, positioning himself as a keen observer of our time.

His paintings, accompanied by preparatory drawings that offer insight into his creative process, blend allegory and caricature within a rich tradition of social commentary. Vivid, hybrid characters and chaotic scenes are meticulously crafted to convey a sense of unease. This approach is reminiscent of medieval iconography, which used dramatic and often unsettling imagery to convey religious, moral, and societal messages. Additionally, Boehm's work draws from the exaggerated forms of early 20th-century satirical art.

Enigmatic figures – morphing into machines, cartoons, animals, and their unconscious selves – channel a time marked by crises, upheavals, and the relentless flow of information. Boehm's layered technique juxtaposes diverse textures, colors, and forms, creating a complex tapestry of the zeitgeist. Collages incorporating fabric patches add depth and a tactile quality to his work. These elements function like a second skin, enhancing the physicality and emotional resonance of the paintings. His canvases become a battleground of clashing components, symbolizing the fractured and multifaceted nature of postmodern life.

Masks, both literal and metaphorical, are a recurring motif that reflects the performative nature of identity and the layers of artifice that define everyday interactions. On this hyperreal world stage, authenticity becomes performative – a concept resonant in an era dominated by social media and political spectacle. Boehm's hybrid characters embody this shift, navigating a world where the real and the simulated are increasingly indistinguishable from one another.

Inspired by "Pigsty", a 1969 film by Pier Paolo Pasolini, IL PORCILE, 2023/24, sets a dystopian scene around a casino table where global players engage in a high-stakes political poker game. Their faces are fragmented, never fully recognizable. As they play, a semi-naked female figure, wearing only a star-spangled bikini top, chews on the table's carpet while two men shove gold coins between her legs. In the background, King Kong – serving as metaphor for art, literally unveiling the truth – tears through the architecture and reveals a glimpse of the New York City skyline. His body is adorned with scenes from the artist's personal life. By blending real and fictional characters within overlapping realms, Boehm reinterprets Pasolini's critique of the establishment.

In WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR, 2023/24, a giant double-faced puppeteer, reminiscent of Gepetto from Walt Disney's 1940 "Pinocchio", pulls the strings of political figures while standing on a boat. His uncertain fate parallels that of the boat, which is being sunk in the harbor by an ominous pink figure, while a fisherman pours oil into the water. The painting, much like Pinocchio's tale, serves as an existential metaphor for self-determination. Foreseeing the painter, a reclining reader contemplates this idea while engaging with Albert Camus's "The Stranger" and the theory of the absurd.

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LUST ANGST SCHMERZ EKSTASE is an unflinching exploration of the human experience, challenging us to confront uncomfortable truths in a world that seems permanently on the brink. Much like a seismograph, Boehm records the tremors of societal change with a sharp, critical eye. In an age marked by wars, inflation, and societal stress, his paintings feel urgent, relevant. The underworldly atmospheres he creates tap into the collective unconscious where suppressed desires and fears are given free rein. Mirroring a fractured world, they openly question the conditions shaping our reality.

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