

## **THE LAST WALTZ (For Leon)**

24 January - 2 March 2019

Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to present *The Last Waltz (For Leon)*, a groupshow featuring works by Marcel Dzama, Armen Eloyan, Gelatin, Adrian Ghenie, Kati Heck, Anton Henning, Tomasz Kowalski, Friedrich Kunath, Edward Lipski, Jonathan Meese, Ryan Mosley, Peter Rogiers, Ben Sledsens, Ed Templeton, Rinus Van de Velde, Aaron Van Erp, Henk Visch, Franz West and Anke Weyer. *The Last Waltz (For Leon)* marks an important new step in the gallery's ambition: the gallery will trade the space of the Verlatstraat for a new building designed by OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, located on the Nieuw Zuid in Antwerp. The opening of the new space is planned for April 2019. Together with the majority of artists the gallery brings a last goodbye to the space that shaped the gallery for the last 20 years. All media are represented in this show: sculptures, paintings, drawings, film and photography.

The work of Marcel Dzama (°1974, Winnipeg; lives and works in New York) is immediately recognised by his own distinctive visual language, layered with artistic influences like Dada and Marcel Duchamp. He combines political and social developments with a world of fables, myths and fictional stories. Mostly known for his drawings, he also makes sculptures, paintings, films and dioramas.

According to Armen Eloyan (°1966, Yerevan; lives and works in Zurich and Antwerp) a good painting is like a good joke, the pieces have to come together. With his characteristic dark humor, colourful paint and thick black contours, Eloyan reveals a dystopian world where things are thrown out of balance, confronting the viewer with existential questions. Combining influences from street art and animated cartoons with references to great pioneers in painting such as Willem De Kooning and Philip Guston, Armen Eloyan depicts a world where familiar figures, associated with our childhood, are stripped from every ounce of innocence.

Gelatin (live and work in Vienna) is comprised of four artists. They first met in 1978, when they all attended a summer camp. They have been playing and working together since then. Their universe could be defined as a stupendous extravagant jumble. Their work originates out of performances and is translated mostly into sculpture. From 1993 they began exhibiting internationally.

At first sight Adrian Ghenie's (°1977, Baia-Mare; lives and works in Cluj and Berlin) paintings deal with subjects that carry a historical set of references, but collective memory is constantly challenged by enigmatic prophetic actions, occulted and personal folds in the temporal linearity. Ghenie's works have become increasingly complex and multilayered, generating an open-ended set of internal and external meanings. Infused with ambiguity, the works operate in the areas between figuration and abstraction, history and imagination, past and present.

Kati Heck (°1979, Düsseldorf; lives and works in Pulle, Belgium) is to be considered an heiress to German Expressionism. One is reminded of the bars, dancers and actors of Otto Dix and George Grosz at the same time as the Old Masters. Heck synthesizes and fuses styles. She's both an Abstract Expressionist as a Realist. She challenges the medium of paint on a completely new level, as a gesture toward unabashed self-assertion and its radical effects.

The oeuvre of Anton Henning (°1964 Berlin; lives and works in Berlin and Manker) comprises paintings, sculptures, drawings, films, photographs, musical pieces and entire environments and could be read as a contemporary interpretation of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Focussing equally on the search as well as the outcome, he creates a hybrid pictorial event, an anarchy of images liberated from the gravity of the isms in art history. With his motif repertory, material choices, stylistic devices and playful reinventions of the genre types, Henning doesn't simply quote from art history, but he playfully looks for painterly potential through his own pictorial memory which has remained deliquescent, discarding all spatial, temporal, and ideational contexts.

Tomasz Kowalski (°1984 Szczepleszyn; lives and works in Krakow and Szczepleszyn) is a key figure in emerging Polish painting today. His influences owe deep gratitude to the tradition of German Expressionism, Outsider art and esotericism along with Surrealism. The influence of

psychedelia and Postmodern American literature feature prominently in his work. This constellation of references share a common representation of a paranoid thinking about reality, full of alternate versions, varying paths and multiple parallel narrations. It is this combination of Kowalski's imagination, his figurative play with abstraction and confident handling of paint that gives his work a unique vitality. His paintings are a micro-utopia, a reflection of a hypothetical reality or simply a representation of what it means to be alive today, right here.

Friedrich Kunath's (°1974 Chemnitz; lives and works in Los Angeles) work is permeated with ambiguity. His personal journey from East to West Berlin, towards his new-found home in Los Angeles presented Kunath with a wide variety of source material ranging from the canon of art history and German philosophy to the idiom of kitsch and the make-believe world of Hollywood and LA. Many of which are impacted by two poles—the culture of wisdom and popular culture—to the point of obsession and even, at times, systematization. Dealing with the universal themes of human existence, such as love, loss, optimism, vulnerability and melancholy, he serves a variety of media, ranging from painting, sculpture, drawing, video and photography, to expansive installations, all provided with a tragicomic pathos and dreams of possibilities.

"My work exists between the cultural and the visual level," Edward Lipski (° 1966, London; lives and works in London) explains, "I'm interested in the space between something you understand and something that is also abstract. This confusion creates a particular intensity." His work moves between these two poles; the distance between extremes is blurred, until we find ourselves immersed in a seductive visual chaos.

Jonathan Meese (°1970, Tokyo; lives and works in Berlin and Hamburg) is renowned for his multi-faceted work, including wildly exuberant paintings and installations, ecstatic performances, and a powerful body of sculptures. All of Meese's work is driven and supported by a striving for a rule of art, the dictatorship of art. Apparently effortlessly, he has developed in all genres an independent and at the same time unique vocabulary that gives his work a variety, visual energy and quality which, according to Robert Fleck, has been unheard of since Picasso.

In the paintings of Ryan Mosley (°1980 Chesterfield; lives and works in Sheffield) time, place, history, the characters that populate them and the spaces they inhabit are all warped, distorted, thrown out of kilter, in states of fusion, disintegration and recombination. The figures he portrays in various ways merge or correspond with their backgrounds; the contours of their heads, jawlines, beards and hair and cheekbones flattening into a field of interlocking shapes. It is as if, in some hard-to-fathom way, the people Mosley portrays are the paintings they inhabit.

Peter Rogiers's (°1967, Antwerp; lives and works in Oud-Heverlee) ironic-expressive sculptures hover between abstraction and figuration, combining both a tremendous craftsmanship and an innovative visual language. The work of Rogiers is characterized by numerous contradictions, hovering between abstraction and figuration with an overwhelming spatial impact. With his distinctive sense of humor, a large portion of irony and exceptional artisan qualities, Rogiers challenges the conventions of traditional art history by taking them out of their typical context and introducing them in a new imagery. The psychology of the form is at the heart of his practice.

Ben Sledsens's (°1991, Antwerp; lives and works in Antwerp) works testify a profound knowledge of art history. His palette of strong, lively colors, high technical qualities and simple visual language exist within a long tradition that refers to great masters such as Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, Henri Rousseau and Pieter Breughel the Elder. Nature and daily life are also important sources of inspiration for Ben Sledsens. He documents various sources of inspiration and daily life events in his small drawings. His large-scale canvasses seem deceptively simple due to the naïve imagery and very recognizable subjects, but behind this lies a profound thought-out composition in which Sledsens incorporates a visual storyline into his work.

Ed Templeton (°1972, Garden Grove; lives and works in Huntington Beach) spent his youth in a world of skateboarding and punk music. He describes his drawings, photos and paintings by

means of anecdotes and feelings that give a new, more profound interpretation to the images. Human vulnerability is also an important theme in Templeton's paintings and drawings. This particularly applies to the works populated by zombie-like human figures, who seem to have escaped from some medieval tableau of the Last Judgement. Templeton's early skate fame gave him a forum to discuss issues like racism and homophobia that weren't getting much play from the Thrasher (magazine) crowd. He served a pioneering role in leading skateboarding into the creative and cultural influence it is today.

Over the past few years, Rinus Van de Velde (°1983, Leuven, lives and works in Antwerp) has built a strikingly coherent oeuvre, mainly consisting of monumental, narrative charcoal drawings. Although these drawings still play a prominent role in his work, Van de Velde has evolved increasingly towards a 'total artist', creating a tension between fiction and reality by the use of different media such as drawings, sculptures, installations and film. With his large scale drawings Van de Velde invites the viewer to step into his carefully constructed universe. Casting himself as a succession of fictive characters and constantly reinventing himself as a different kind of artist, Van de Velde inhabits different personas, genres and art forms.

Aaron van Erp's (°1978, Veghel; lives and works in Eindhoven and Asuncion, Paraguay) morose humor is channeled into haunted paintings. The artist's portrayal of a reflection of a disconcerting atmosphere has never been more potent. His works often displays random acts of surreal violence. His gruesome scenes take place in the artist signature dystopian environments, which take the form of deserted beaches and isolated interiors which are made even more absurdly surreal by the random placement of objects such as a table tennis table, or a FedEx crate.

With his poetic sculptures, Henk Visch (°1950 Eindhoven; lives and works in Eindhoven and Berlin) often manages to evoke all kinds of associations and stimulate the viewer's fantasy. In Visch's awareness there is both joy and pain. It contains raw material to play with and, even more, to work with so as to embody and stage, in a way that is familiar and secret, harrowing and full of leaps, some "truths" about our sexuality, our desires and our terrors, our arabesques and our collective gesticulations, our constant approximations, or, in short, our tribulations in space with the body as the vehicle: real bodies, invented bodies, those of known and utopian reigns.

Franz West (°1947, Vienna – †2012, Vienna) is without doubt one of the most important sculptors and environment artists of contemporary art. His oeuvre is characterized not only by the forms he invents, but also for the communicative quality with which he directly addresses the viewer, urging him/ her to participate. For West, the essence of the artwork is not the aesthetic quality, but how the work is used. These objects stimulate the ingenuity of the public and disrupt conditioned behavior in the exhibition space. His work makes us think about our living space and the social and personal activities that are happening there. The artist aims to create a certain interaction between artwork and viewer, between object and subject. An interaction that must ensure that art becomes an open and interactive process.

Dismantling false dichotomies such as abstraction versus figuration, accident versus intention and confusion versus order, Anke Weyer (°1974 Karlsruhe; lives and works in New York) has developed a practice where anything is possible, where confusion is as marvellous as it is treacherous. Uninhibited and instinctively Anke Weyer paints with a certain urgency, a speed that keeps the painted picture honest and pure. Speed triumphs over composition. Her compositional choices are made in the moment, very consciously or impulsive, each decision has a different meaning and magnitude. The paintings document Weyer's proces: applying layers of paint, taking paint off, overpainting it again. Using energetic brush marks, drips, wipes and scrubbing, she develops a flux of forms and lines.