

## Sies + Höke Galerie

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### Press release

#### **Marcel Dzama: Be good little Beuys and Dada might buy you a Bauhaus**

6 September – 26 October, 2019, Opening: Friday 6 September, 6-10 pm

In his eighth solo show at Sies + Höke, New York-based Canadian artist Marcel Dzama (\*1974) presents new drawings and sculptures, a large-scale wall painting and a 2-channel video.

For more than two decades, Marcel Dzama has fascinated a wide international audience with his drawings, sculptures, installations and video works. In the late 1990s, he caused a sensation with his sketch-like drawings of fantastic characters interacting brutally yet comically. Later, large-format diorama showcases appeared, in which lovingly crafted ceramic figures perform remarkably martial acts. Other central works by the artist are his sculptures of puppets, masks and dolls, some of them kinetic and executed in ceramics, sheet metal or papier-mâché; as well as his elaborately staged films populated with dancing chess pieces. Lately, large-format works on paper have emerged, increasingly containing comments on current affairs.

Dzama's image repertoire includes a wide range of art-historical quotations. One can recognize ballet costumes by Oskar Schlemmer or Francis Picabia, for example, and direct references to Francisco de Goya, Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Beuys or Sigmar Polke. Embedded text fragments contain quotes from William Blake or Rainer Maria Rilke. However, it's not just elements from the past that spur Dzama's creativity. The music enthusiast has collaborated with various colleagues from the beginning of his career, whether as part of the Royal Art Lodge in Winnipeg, which he co-founded, or in the form of collaborations with members of the band Arcade Fire, the musician Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth), the filmmaker Spike Jonze, the actress Amy Sedaris, the ensemble of the New York City Ballet, or fellow artists like Jockum Nordström. A special influence on Dzama's work has recently been the ongoing collaboration with artist Raymond Pettibon, who like no other has established a combination of punk rock influences, sharp social criticism and cartoon drawing style in contemporary art.

Through his friendship and collaboration with Raymond Pettibon, Dzama's drawing style has also developed and, especially when it comes to larger formats, has become looser and more fluent, but also more vividly coloured and equipped with multiple levels of action. In terms of content, his comments on current affairs have intensified, especially since the presidency of Donald Trump and increasing political populism in the western world have offered more and more scope for attack. Work titles or text lines embedded in his drawings, such as "The sleep of truth creates dictators" or "The revolution will be female" stand for themselves. A male lion with the collaged eyes of a young woman discusses gender relations, while "Mother Nature" comments on the state of the environment in the age of climate change. Cartoon characters shooting pistols like madmen remind of the US gun laws in need of overhaul. One large drawing refers to the Old Testament's story of Judith and Holofernes, in which beautiful and courageous Judith seduces the tyrannical general Holofernes, makes him drunk and then cuts his head off, thus saving her hometown from submission by the opponent. The drawing can be understood as a protest against certain white-male-dominated power structures, according to the artist.

In addition to new large-format drawings, Dzama's exhibition features a group of mask-like sculptures, a large scale immersive wall painting and a new 2-channel video projection. The video involves a tyrannical artist and film director, aka Marcel Dzama, played by Amy Sedaris, who takes up a game of chess with a singing vampire, played by Raymond Pettibon.

Marcel Dzama was born in 1974 in Winnipeg, Canada, and lives in New York. His solo exhibitions include: *Drawing on a Revolution*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2017); *NYCB Art Series presents Marcel Dzama*, David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center, New York (2016); *Une danse des bouffons (A jester's dance)*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015); *Mischief Makes a Move*, World Chess Hall of Fame, St. Louis, Missouri (2015); *Hollow Laughter*, Kunstmuseum Thun (2014); *The never known into the forgotten*, Kunstverein Braunschweig (2011); *A Game of Chess*, Gemeentemuseum The Hague (2011); *Aux mille tours*, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (2010); *Marcel Dzama*, Pinakothek der Moderne Munich (2008). His works can be found in the collections of numerous international museums, such as: MoMA (New York), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), Dallas Museum of Art (Dallas), Musée d'art contemporain du Montréal (Montréal), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Vancouver Art Gallery (Vancouver), and Tate Modern (London).

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