



MEESE'S ODYSSEY
PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE | KUNST

PRESS PREVIEW | 14.11.2018, 11.00 A.M.
OPENING | 14.11.2018, 07.00 P.M.
DURATION OF EXHIBITION | 15.11.2018 - 03.03.2019

THE ARTIST WILL BE PRESENT FOR THE OPENING.

Jonathan Meese (b. 1970 in Tokyo and based in Berlin) is one of the most internationally renowned and polarizing artists of his generation. His world views and reflections on mythology and the power of art are voiced not only in the mediums of painting, sculpture, installation, and performance; Meese also uses language as a material, incorporating into his work devices like onomatopoeia and literary tropes. Jonathan Meese's use of image and text – both playful and thoughtful at once – is at the focal point of this exhibition, which includes works from the last twenty-five years.

At the core of the exhibition are 18 paintings from a series that the artist, until now, has deliberately kept for himself. Several of the paintings on display are being revealed to the public for the first time. Selected works from German private collections enhance the presentation.

In addition, 25 spatial models and small sculptures, as well as approximately 75 drawings, photo collages, and artist's books will be on display. Here for the first time, Meese will exhibit the spatial models – made in the mid-90s – as stand-alone objects. Realized between 1993 and 2000, most of the drawings will also be making their public debut. Footage of one of the artist's earliest performances – gathered from his own personal archive – will be shown as well.

A look back brings the central themes of Meese's oeuvre into sharp relief. In the early works one can observe the complex first formulations of these themes, including: gestures and insignias of power, male and female warriors, fairy-tale villains, night terrors in the children's room, and the ambivalence of evil. The appearance of an innocent, clear-sighted baby animal provides a counterbalance and directs the viewer's attention to the unexpectedly tender aspects of Meese's pictorial cosmos.

A work in situ, Jonathan Meese designed a carpet-diagram exclusively for the museum show in Munich. Staking out various 'coordinates', it provides the topography of the exhibition and thus unites 'Meese's Odyssey' as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork). In the Greek epic poem the 'Odyssey', the hero Odysseus embarks on a series of dangerous adventures and faces mysterious challenges – and, in the end, returns home changed. Like a present-day Ulysses, in this exhibition Jonathan Meese navigates his way through an imaginary journey with numerous stops along the way.



Encountering various ambivalent characters and situations, the artist courageously adopts the most archaic role of a symbolic saviour and liberator – who, nevertheless, is not always victorious.

With this exhibition, Jonathan Meese's art proves to be as timeless as it is contemporary. His approach is in a league with that of other artists – for example, Beckmann, Bacon, Balthus, Baselitz, Picasso, Rauch, Warhol, and Van Gogh – when he confronts disturbing subjects in self-appointed challenges, set for the sake of mastering them – to the furthest extent possible. Of course, he is not always successful. But failure opens up new paths and the journey becomes its own reward.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication that addresses the various forms of narration in Meese's oeuvre, exploring, among other things, the structural role played by myths and archetypes.

A series of events in tandem with the exhibition, amongst others, will present film footage of performances by Jonathan Meese.

Curators: Bernhart Schwenk and Swantje Grundler

The exhibition is funded by
PIN. Freunde der Pinakothek der Moderne e.V.

Press material for the exhibition can be found at www.pinakothek.de/presse.

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