

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

Uwe Henneken

The teachings of the Transhistorical Flamingo

08 September 2017 - 21 October 2017

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present Uwe Henneken's first solo exhibition in London from 8 September to 21 October 2017.

Interested in the connection between artistic and shamanic states of mind, Henneken creates paintings that offer access to hallucinatory, trance-induced scenarios. Vivid, multi-coloured and often incomprehensible, the artist's allegorical works fluctuate between different moments in time, drawing heavily from anthropology, German folklore, Romantic painting and hyper-real, modern imagery.

Akin to the tragic wanderers that populate Caspar David Friedrich's sublime landscapes, Henneken's characters in *The teachings of the Transhistorical Flamingo* are depicted as if undertaking some type of journey. Marching through stretches of thick forest and remote hinterland, the interlopers are beckoned further onwards by fantastical skies. An ethereal figure is depicted in several states of self-discovery throughout the works, much like the archetypal hero which James Campbell writes about in his theory of mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), in which the main character must complete a series of arduous tasks in order to achieve enlightenment. For example, in *Space in Space* (2017), the figure floats in a void whilst gazing at a cosmos-like ball that is reflected in its own body, creating a sense of unity between the two. The sphere is encircled by an ouroboros, an ancient symbol of a serpent eating its own tail used to represent the self-conscious and the infinite cycle of life and death, serving to emphasise this feeling of wholesomeness. *A Call* (2017) depicts the same diminutive figure, now on terra firma, standing in awe beneath a star-lit canopy of gnarled branches as if it has just come back to earth or about to set off on its voyage. The viewer also becomes a protagonist in these scenes; in *Transhistorical waterfall* (2017), we seem to happen upon two, rainbow-coloured gatekeepers, bleeding into their surroundings, who look directly back towards us. In the exhibition, Henneken taps into a spiritual, dream-like space where almost anything can happen, yet almost everything evades explanation.

Uwe Henneken (born 1974, Paderborn, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. Selected solo exhibitions include those at Kunstverein Braunschweig; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Museum de Hallen, Haarlem; Meyer Riegger, Berlin; Gisela Capitain, Cologne; Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels; Capitain Petzel, Berlin and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York. Selected group exhibitions include those at Tanya Leighton, Berlin; Kunstpalais Erlangen; Frankfurter Kunstverein; ZKM, Karlsruhe; Olbricht Collection, Berlin and Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt. Henneken's work is featured in the current display of the permanent collection at Sammlung Boros, Berlin.