

CONDITION HUMAINE

October 29 - December 4, 2021

54 White Street, New York, NY (US)

GRIMM is pleased to announce *Condition Humaine*, a group exhibition with Dirk Braeckman, Matthias Franz, Kati Heck, Chantal Joffe, Dana Lixenberg, Daniel Richter, Norbert Schwontkowski, Caroline Walker and Guido van der Werve.

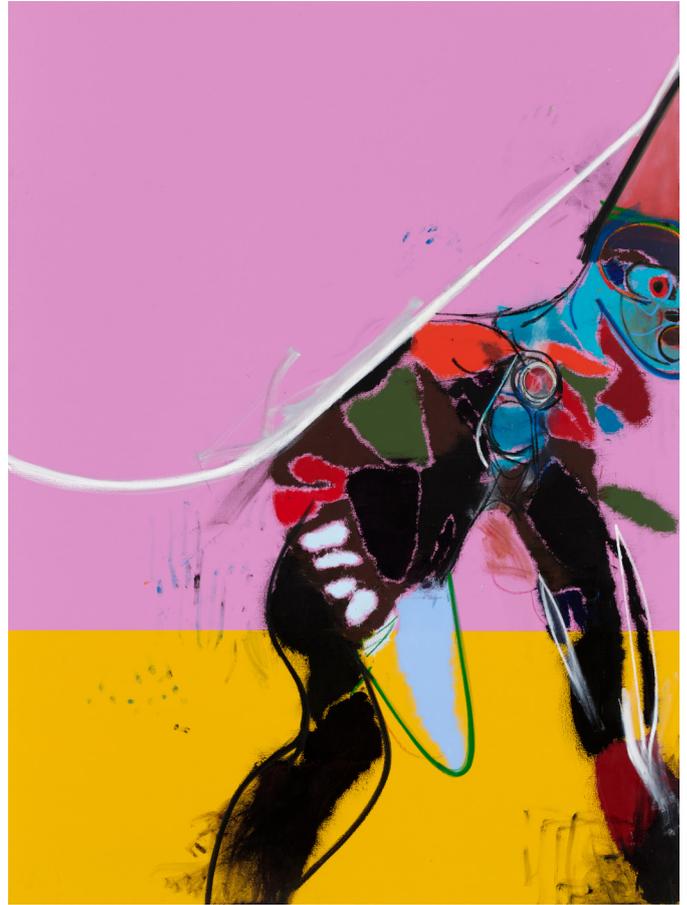
The exhibition *Condition Humaine* showcases a group of artists that investigate the existential psychology of the lived experience through works which transcend modes of representation. In a world commonly thought to be absurd, the participating artists attempt to reconcile one's sense of disorientation and perplexity through various approaches to portraiture, offering still innovations to a centuries-old lexicon in art history. The exhibition borrows its title from André Malraux's 1933 novel of the same name.

On this occasion, the gallery presents new works by **Matthias Franz** (b. 1984, Ilmenau, DE) for the first time in New York since announcing representation of the artist in October 2021. The figures and representations in Franz's paintings are often skewed and abstracted, manipulating the viewer's perspective and driving narrative scenes into uncanny depths. Within the muted oil paintings seen in the exhibition are obscured performance stages, classrooms and beds of sleeping bodies – offering dreamlike wanderings with suggestions of detachment, inaction and rebelliousness.

Caroline Walker (b. 1982, Dunfermline, UK) debuts the first painting in a new series set in an anonymous British holiday resort. A lone figure passively glares past the viewer, lost in a gambling hall's blaze of neon lights. Walker has received wide acclaim for her portrayals of women as works of social commentary. The artist depicts small movements of daily existence and encapsulates the corners of life which are often overlooked. The complexities of her subjects' lives rise to the surface and coalesce in images that both fill the senses and speak to poignant moments of human experience.

Known for painting figures with exceptional psychological and emotional weight, **Chantal Joffe** (b. 1969, Saint Albans, VT, US) contributes a new work that depicts the artist's reflection as she looks over her shoulder while painting herself in a mirror. It is a self-portrait with an unusual perspective: a viewpoint seldom seen by oneself that offers an intimate and angst-ridden, if even skewed, perspective.

Daniel Richter's (b. 1962, Eutin, DE) large-scale painting *Yesterday's News* evokes an urgent, kinetic energy, with its subject fleeing the canvas. In this new work, the anthropomorphic figure is represented through lines and fields of colour in an unresolved place that eludes actual spatial orientation. With traces of isolation and violence, Richter's recent works explore movement, energy and formal qualities in painting that evade apparent narrative elements.



Daniel Richter | *Yesterday's News*, 2021

Kati Heck (b. 1979, Düsseldorf, DE) mines art history, literature and folklore to form a practice that is deeply rich with allegory to explore the human psyche. In the exhibition the artist shows two new paintings: a portrait titled *Bone Music (Knochenmusic)* and the large-scale work *Late Meeting (Verspätete Sitzung)*. Heck's realist depiction of the human figure is masterful, but the artist upends her precision with open-ended scenes that recall motifs of German Expressionism and Surrealism.

Dirk Braeckman's (b. 1958, Eeklo, BE) work aims to push the boundaries of photography, challenging the notion that photographic images serve as physical and practical evidence. In Braeckman's new works, the artist employs images of human figures and anonymous interiors that are manipulated and double exposed, offering a multitude of possible interpretations that interrogate representation. Braeckman's images raise questions but offer no answers.

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Installation View | Matthias Franz, *Gang of four plus one*, 2021

Norbert Schwontkowski's (1949 - 2013, Bremen, DE) paintings suggest a deep melancholy with their pale, muted tones that reflect the artist's existential disquiet. A 2008 painting, *Pendel*, shows a boxer's punching bag in a dark studio illuminated by moonlight, accompanied by a mere sitting stool. No figure is present; only a still, quiet suspension of action which could be likened to the voids, creative or otherwise, felt by the artist. The work *Broken Glass*, perhaps a self-portrait, portrays its subject with a despondent expression fractured by a broken mirror or window. The artist's sense of whimsy is evident in the painting *Who owns the Reflection in the Mirror (Wem gehört das Bild im Spiegel)*; a question central to the theme of the exhibition.

A selection of photographs from various series by **Dana Lixenberg** (b. 1964, Amsterdam, NL) will be exhibited for the first time at the gallery. Lixenberg is revered for her emotionally layered portraits that challenge expectations. The artist treads carefully, respectfully, with her subjects and avoids obvious signifiers of the broader social constructs that are being explored. Using a large-format field camera, the artist creates detailed, enigmatic portraits that uncover the vulnerability of the strong, the resilience of the disenfranchised, the beauty of the disappearing. Complex, unexpected, and often melancholic, Lixenberg's work offers glimpses into the profoundly deep human experience.

Guido van der Werve's (b. 1977, Papendrecht, NL) two-channel video work; *Nummer zeventien, killing time attempt 1, from the deepest ocean to the highest mountain* depicts the artist's emulation of two major feats of achievement: the climbing of Mount Everest (8848 meters) and the descent into the deepest ocean abyss (11040 meters). In the film, the extreme sporting aspects have been removed and the artist's pursuits towards both actions ironically occur in interior, domestic settings. Here the artist examines the personal metaphors that such grandiose achievements suggest. Though physical preparation is of little or no importance, mental endurance remains crucial. Without its more spectacular traits, van der Werve's 'climbing of Mount Everest' exhibits the fortitude required in everyday living.

About the gallery

GRIMM was founded in Amsterdam in 2005. Since its establishment, the gallery has been committed to promoting and supporting emerging and mid-career artists who work in a diverse range of media. Representing thirty international artists, the gallery has two spaces in Amsterdam, and one in New York. This year GRIMM expanded to new 6,000 square foot gallery space in Tribeca, New York.

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