

# rachel uffner



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leonhard Hurzlmeier

*Told Tales*

With a special presentation curated by Christian Ganzenberg

Otl Aicher, A.M. Cassandre, Markus Ebner, Auguste Herbin, Adrian Hobbs, Loie Hollowell, Rudi Hurzlmeier, Kamagurka, Raoul De Keyser, Konrad Klapheck, Peter Meetz, Berthold Reiss, Julina Babara Rosa, Christoph Ruckhäberle, Karl Valentin & Liesl Karlstadt, Léon Wuidar, Jerry Zeniuk

September 13 — November 3, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, September 13, 6—8pm

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present *Told Tales*, Leonhard Hurzlmeier's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

Divided into three sections, the show begins with a group exhibition curated by Christian Ganzenberg. Installed in the newly expanded front gallery space, it brings together works by artists from different generations who all have a place in Hurzlmeier's visual universe. Works by Hurzlmeier's contemporaries, teachers, role models, his family members and friends, create a cabinet of curiosities made up of objects, photographs, and paintings. This Hurzlmeierian panopticon demonstrates how the artist recognizes kindred spirits while giving us a sense of what shapes his vision and practice. The selected works act as moveable pieces in the artist's ongoing dialogue with his visual surroundings, which are evocative, distinctive, and diverse.

Upstairs Hurzlmeier will present the largest selection of his sculptures to date—a grouping of assemblages made from remnants of civilization, created by the artist between 2011 to the present. The found objects collected by the artist on walks in the city and countryside, represent the output of obscure production and distribution chains. Here, Hurzlmeier brings together splinters of wood, rocks, plastic, metal, an air pump, a whisk, a cheese grater and tree bark, and combines them with poetic surrealism and abstract humor. Hurzlmeier breathes life into these commonplace items, turning them into vivid material creatures.

The main gallery will feature a new series of paintings which Hurzlmeier produced during a recent residency in Wels, Austria. Marking a departure from his usual motifs often focused on women, Hurzlmeier moves into large-scale symbolic compositions imbued with socio-political connotations, while staying true to his geometric and hard-edged painterly style.

This is evident in one of the largest paintings in the exhibition, *Eternal Eden*. Here the female figure is merely echoed, present only by her absence. The painting suggests the original story of incarnation and the fall of man from paradise. The tree of knowledge, apple, and the snake are all present, but Eve is not, nor is Adam. This is where *Told Tales* departs from the original narrative, and an alternative ending seems possible; will the snake take a bite of the apple instead, and what would happen next? We don't get far into this quicksand of possible outcomes, as even the snake seems at a loss, its body forming a question mark. On closer inspection, however, the answer is already concealed in the question; wound around the branch, the snake's tail creates the Fibonacci spiral, the symbol of science and enlightenment. But isn't that just another told tale?

The sociopolitical utopia associated with the idea of eternal paradise sets the tone for this new series. These archaic and minimalistic motifs address both pressing and current issues and the eternal constants of human existence. For example in *Dream Boat*,

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Hurlzmeier renders a ship in bold yellow tones, set under a green flag. Sailing towards a red star, appearing to flee from a storm about to break, setting course for the perfect system. Other works allegorize the timeless yet contemporary desire for absolute justice (*Libra*), for an end to violence (*Cannon in Crops*), for eternal life (*Candle in the Wind*), and a world without borders (*Fenced Island*). The painting's forceful, monolithic form and soft pastel-colored palette, create something fragile and unstable; a transient state that could dissolve into several possibilities, a dreamlike paradox.

Hurlzmeier's iconographic treatment of archetypal ideals culminates in two works that take formal reduction to the extreme, leaving nothing behind but the shape of tears. Their radically realistic message drily conveys—life isn't a playground, but a monotonous and dogmatic locus (*Grey Period*) which requires *Blood, Sweat & Tears*. Or do we again detect some irony and pastiche here? One thing is for certain, as *Elephant in the Room* suggests, the world is a strange place whose told, and untold stories never let go of us.

Text by Christian Ganzenberg and the artist

**Leonhard Hurlzmeier** (b. 1983, Starnberg, Germany) has participated in exhibitions domestic and internationally at venues including Lothringer 13, Munich, DE; Munich Re, Munich, DE; Autocenter, Berlin, DE; Skaftell — Center for Visual Art East Iceland, Seydisfjörður, ISL; among others. Hurlzmeier has been the recipient of the Kulturpreis Bayern of the EOn Bayern AG award and the Jubiläums-Stipendien-Stiftung for the Akademie der Bildenden Künste grant. He is in the permanent collection of the Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon and Munich RE, Munich, DE. In 2018, Hatje Cantz published *Neue Frauen*, a monograph of the artists' work. Hurlzmeier lives and works in Munich, Germany.

**Christian Ganzenberg** is a curator and writer based in Munich, DE.

Image: Leonhard Hurlzmeier, *Eternal Eden*, 2019, oil on canvas, 94 1/2 x 67 inches (240 x 170 cm)

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