

Debut Exhibition from Thea Lang Collective Challenges the Bounds of Originality

Berlin, Sept. 10th, 2021: German art duo Thea Lang Collective presents their first solo exhibition, *Aus Beute Kunst*, on view through Oct. 3rd, 2021 at Kurfürstenstrasse 33 in Berlin. This title roughly translates to “fine art,” but the original German phrase is loaded with subtext, remixing “ausbeute” (yield) and “ausbeutung” (exploitation) and “beutekunst” (looted art.) *Aus Beute Kunst* explores the absurd symbiosis between the collective’s two disparate members, each pilfering apex abilities off the other’s practice. This inaugural show centers around their latest collaborative works, with supporting selections from each member’s individual oeuvre.

Aus Beute Kunst dances on the margin between gorgeous and grotesque. Color blocked stencils from Hamburg-based LAPIZ enshrine themselves like crown jewels in illustrative oil paintings by Bremen-based Karla. The artists passed these canvases back and forth between their home cities, blanketing each with sedimentary layers of archetypal imagery. *The Abandoned One* scans like a quintessential religious work from the art historical canon while *Komm Such Du Schau Zu* (roughly translated: *Come Take a Look*) riffs off *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* by Rembrandt. The more you dig, the more you find.

Draped in a conspicuous enigma resulting from the socially critical duo’s joint aesthetics, the works across *Aus Beute Kunst* don’t pursue a despairing agenda in the slightest. Sometimes somber in tone, each artwork savors its own undeniable beauty, as evidenced by the brazen contrast of primary colors present throughout *Freedomsucker* and the lighthearted undertones of *Mortal Kombat*, which collects pop culture references to testify that even in the throes of chaos humanity knows how to make and take a joke.

Most of all, *Aus Beute Kunst* highlights the mutual principles anchoring the partnership between Thea Lang’s two accomplices. LAPIZ and Karla both hail from unconventional backgrounds. The former is a self-taught stencil artist who left a career in virology to learn muralism from masters like Fintan Magee. The latter took two years to study at the Dusseldorf Arts Academy before dropping out due to his disdain for academia’s elitism.

LAPIZ and Karla have taken the name Thea Lang Collective in homage to Fritz Lang and Thea von Harbou, an infamous sci-fi film couple from Berlin known for cult classics like *Metropolis*. Fritz and Thea’s complex dynamic shares narrative threads with Thea Lang Collective, a balanced dyad combining LAPIZ’s logical stencil cutting with Karla’s more intuitive, free-flowing pure painting. Every artwork by Thea Lang extrapolates this innate juxtaposition to investigate the gnarled complexity of our times, where even humanity’s redeeming qualities are wrapped in ambivalence.

Contrary to the customary first take, *Aus Beute Kunst* doesn’t sate itself with simply surveying humanity’s most recognizable motifs. Deep down, the show crafts a backwards celebration of this nihilistic suspicion that every original idea’s been had. Thea Lang steals from pop culture, but they also steal from each other, elaborating on the other’s talents with each pass of the canvas. Taking the festivities full circle, Karla will be on site intermittently throughout the exhibition to offer free tattoos from the artwork, providing the boldest attendees an opportunity to loot this show for themselves and take a motif home on their own actual body.