

THORSTEN BRINKMANN. **PARADIECLIPSE**

February 3 - April 1, 2017

Gallery Mathias Güntner, Hamburg

The landscapes and creatures that the Hamburg artist Thorsten Brinkmann gathers in the exhibition play with the classical art genres of still life, landscape, and sculpture. In his process, he uses found objects from the flea markets, bulky waste, or junkyards, to develop atmospheric natural scenarios that harness everyday objects - pieces of furniture, containers, or vessels into a mysterious narration in which they harmoniously function with each other. In *Pogonia* (2016), one imagines oneself in an exotic, shimmering bluish forest. Curved chair legs and glass vases combined with curvaceously sawn wooden panels grow into all kinds of trees and plants in the photograph. *Gluno* (2016), on the other hand, shows a hilly landscape of objects in different shades of brown, such as a worn leather bag, chair backs, and other furniture made of wood, which have been interlocked with virtuoso verve.

In two newly created showcase works (2017), Brinkmann takes the two-dimensional landscapes into a spatial dimension. With things that are more likely to come from the interior he creates external worlds that allow different interpretations depending on the perspective. Unlike the photographs, they allow conclusions to be drawn about the materials used and how they are materials used and their processing. The illuminated barrels (2017), composed of parts of a wall units, display a whimsical three-dimensional imagery, an allusion to the usual use of this piece of to the common use of this piece of furniture for storing all kinds of decorative objects.

Known for his equally ambiguous and humorous work and exhibition titles, Brinkmann again turns the wheel of associative possibilities with the title **PARADIECLIPSE**. The reference to the Garden of Eden, for example, refers here to the place of longing that has been since the beginning of the 19th century in countless poems, fairy tales and legends of the Romantic period. The "German Forest," which has become the epitome of the German nation through the stylized Nibelungenlied books, which was stylized into a national myth, became the epitome of Germanic/German culture. Here the "Eclipse", however, casts a shadow on this ideal. It is no coincidence that suns are motifs that appear several times in this context. In the work *Peak* (2016), which shows a monolithic mountain with a pink sky, a celestial body is assigned a central role in terms of pictorial composition. It is reminiscent of the Surrealist Max Ernst's landscapes, of *Die ganze Stadt* (1935/36) or *Grätenwald* (1926), which also play with the symbolic power of the sun (or, in contrast, that of the moon). According to a series of these utopian jungle paintings and ruined cities, in 1937 Ernst created the painting *Der Hausengel* (The Triumph of Surrealism), which depicts a hybrid being ecstatically dancing in a desert landscape. Brinkmann creates a similar creature - *Skrillo* (2016), a hybrid of avian creature and fighter, who performs a strange ritual of dance and threatening gestures in the video of the same name. Through a simple cinematic trick, the figure seems strangely alienated, subjected to an inherent power. On the soundtrack, sounds played backwards and thus alienated sounds on the soundtrack additionally intensify a feeling of unease. But this is only half the truth; Thorsten Brinkmann works this time with a gloomy, heavy and partly morbid pictorial vocabulary, which combines the large, sometimes pathetic subjects of nature, forest, paradise - but he does not do this without a twist. On several occasions the artist offers us a dense network of art-historical and pop-cultural references that are humorously commented on in many places. The shaman warrior *Skrillo* is not the only creature that the artist makes room for in his personal version of a dystopian world. Bird chimerism, half parrot, half perfume bottle (*Papagon*, 2016), flying dinosaurs (*Knoppfa*, 2016), *Wolperdinger* (Jackalope) made from ceramic parts, or the *Röckler* (2016), a cross between a piece of clothing, an artist's shoes, a lamp, and antlers - they all bring to life Brinkmann's paradise, turning it into a mystical place that remains open to interpretation and ambivalence.

Text: Christiane Opitz, Additions Marita Landgraf