

V1 Gallery presents



I Saw Two Suns

- A solo exhibition by Emma Kohlmann

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY JANUARY 18. 2019. TIME: 17.00 - 21.00

EXHIBITION PERIOD: JANUARY 18 – FEBRUARY 23. 2019

I Saw Two Suns takes its departure in a story of 2500 years old piece of ancient Roman pottery. The ceramic shard, that resides in The Getty Villa's (Los Angeles, USA) permanent museum collection, depicts a centaur masturbating with an inscription above its head that reads "I see two suns". This could have been a fragment from an amphora or a household object. The phrase "I see two suns" symbolizes the feeling of reaching sexual climax. It also describes the extremity of ejaculation. Depictions like this were obligatory in Roman society. They believed in the forward notion that sexuality was fluid and transparent. The disorientating nature of reaching your peak. The moment of being rattled at the core of your being.

Emma Kohlmann was drawn to the image of the two suns. An image not cloaked in contemporary societal values. A concept that can still be understood, felt and visualized.

The new works Emma Kohlmann has created, on paper, canvas and in ceramics, have been touched by the edges of the suns; they are doubling, tripling and metastasizing. Kohlmann sees it as a way to describe the synastry of color, the weight of a body, the feeling of skin or the flapping wings of a human faced bird directly transmitted onto a piece of canvas. Like etchings or tablets carved out of wax. Images that have preexisted the artist. Yet without knowing this, they have since found her.

Inspired by the theoretical works of Georges Bataille and Roland Barthes who both studied the expression, "la petite mort" ("the little death"), which refers to a moment of losing consciousness (likened to an orgasm) or a life force moment in-between life and death. The series of tombstone like works on paper in the exhibition represent a literal description of the instability and momentary lapse of life. The traction between natural and unnatural forms are seen as nightmarish and anxiety provoking. These funeral plates double as architecture, objects meant to hold something.

A large part of Kohlmann's practice is dedicated to the process of image gathering. From books on architecture, erotica, spirituality, mythologies and ancient cultures, online resources, or photos she has personally taken in museums or in various historical sites. This collection contains images of ancient Roman and Greek pottery, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Mesopotamian sculpture, Japanese Fans, Amish quilts - the inspiration for a new series of works on canvas in the exhibition - and aqueducts photographed near Kohlmann's native home in the Bronx, New York.

Kohlmann is drawn to the naiveness of art making. Searching for crudeness, simpleness, the imaginary pureness of learning how to draw. The energy of being. She works from intuition in one instant motion. Never revisits or retouches a work. She works with an idea on various materials until she is content with the results. If she is not content – she will start over – except this time the tenseness of the canvas, ceramic, cloth or paper won't hold her.

Kohlmann's work can be viewed as a collection of lost and found ideas, objects and images. Retrieving them from wherever they live in the depths of her mind. Subconsciously and consciously, she creates patterns of symbols, shapes and figures, which then become part of an unspoken narrative. A lineage from primordial times, through ancient cultures and into the present. Kohlmann guides the connection between the unspoken with form.

Emma Kohlmann was born in New York City in 1989. She currently lives and works in Amherst, Western Massachusetts. She graduated from Hampshire College with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2011, where she composed her own major in aesthetics, feminist theory and drawing. Kohlmann publishes her own artists' books and other ephemera such as records, zines and textiles. She has exhibited extensively in the past years, including the Portland Museum of Art, USA, MOCA, Tucson, USA, Jack Hanley, New York, USA and Tennis Elbow/The Journal, New York, USA. *I Saw Two Suns* is Kohlmann's second solo exhibition with V1 Gallery.

Please do not hesitate to contact the gallery for further information, press photos or artists interviews:
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Opening hours: Wednesday-Friday: 12-18. Saturday: 12-16. Or by appointment.
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