

ISSUE #35

- Shristi Sainani

Exhibition : *Puzzling Astonishment*

Artist : *David Lehmann*

Venue : *Choi & Lager Gallery (Seoul, South Korea)*

Dates : *2nd August - 18th September 2021*



Ultra Contemporaneity as the art which is as close as it can be to the present — very modern or current : extremely contemporary, as defined by Merriam Webster. Visual artist, *David Lehmann* (b. 1987, Germany) is an ultra contemporary artist who lives and works in Cottbus, Germany. He merges narratives of art history with socio-political subjects, to challenges boundaries between myth and deliberately blurred global projections. He uses the self, to critique existing systems. For example : Lehmann's recurring motif is a male artist who is confident with the principles of seduction, but also distrusts them. Through the show, '*Puzzling Astonishment*', *Lehmann* makes his debut in Asia.

Laura Klimt, a German art critic comments, '*Lehmann's paintings do not give us simple promises. Rather, he pushes us viewers into the post-ideological maze; with his carefully chosen titles, this grand persuader allows Nietzsche and Kurt Cobain or even Herodotus and Madonna to appear on the same stage, not caring about the hierarchical cultural critique.*'

Selections from the show '*Puzzling Astonishment*' are:

- **Der Deutsche Phönix (The German Phoenix)**, 2012-2021



source : Choi&Lager Gallery

Evoking fact and fiction, 'Der Deutsche Phönix' is reminiscent of the literary saga The Phoenix by German author Henning Boëtius (also uses the pseudonym Uwe Bastiansen). The thriller is a historic account of the background to the *Hindenburg* disaster where the protagonist wrestles with his fate, post accident. The formal quality of this piece explores the layers of the associated erotics of warfare, which reels in brutality. The work also sets as focus a single entity, navigating upwards through a multiplex synthesis.

- **Urstrom (Original Stream)**, ۲۰۲۱



source : Choi&Lager Gallery

Filled with child-like wonder, *Lehmann's 'Urstrom (Original Stream), 2021'*, brings to stage an aura of *Alice in Wonderland* meets *AbEx*. It exudes surrealistic characters along with aggressive swathes, successfully calling upon modern art. One can find glimpses of animates as in Max Ernst works, as well as the textural complexity of productions by Julie Schumer. The fantastical piece measures 70 x 100 cm, and is an oil on canvas. Its sublime dreamlike demeanour married to the violence of splattered paint encourages an elaborate attachment to layered sentiments.

- **Petite Mort**, 2021



source : Choi&Lager Gallery

La petite mort is an expression which means ‘the brief loss or weakening of consciousness’ and in modern usage refers specifically to ‘the sensation of post orgasm as likened to death’. Critic *Roland Barthes* spoke of *it* as the key to reading literature, the feeling one should get when experiencing great art. *Lehmann’s* work strikes a note with this playful composition, twisted with grim. One can admire the juxtaposition of the contrasting palette with the fragmented indignation expressed by the creatures of the image.

REFERENCES

Choi & Lager, 2021:

Choiandlager.com. 2021. *Choi & Lager*. [online] Available at:
<http://www.choiandlager.com/exhibition.php?exb_id=77&view_id=1963> [Accessed 18 August 2021].