



DOSSIER DE PRESSE
Georg Óskar Giannakoudakis
Your dream is dead.

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Georg Óskar Giannakoudakis

b.1985 in Akureyri, Iceland

Based in Berlin (DE) and Oslo (NO)

George Óskar Giannakoudakis graduated with a Diploma in Fine Arts from Akureyri School of visual arts in 2009 and subsequently obtain his MFA from the Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design in Bergen, Norway in 2016. Since then, Oskar has exhibited internationally in various countries including Spain, Germany, China, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland, to name a few.

Fundamentally, his practice is regarded as a visual diary of his personal observations of the mundane, specifically in nature and people. His works are composed in a unique manner to allow multiple entry points for viewers, prompting them to reflect on the complexities of contemporary life.

Infused with a distinct twist, Oskar's narratives are often sarcastic, but always offer genuine observations of his lived and built environment. A sense of levity and innocence is located within his narratives and murkiness of his palette, to operate as a 'psychological counteract' that enables him to maintain a bemused distance from the profane, the dark, and the obscene.

The book project - Your dream is dead.

Dark, repressed, yet humorous and playful - these are some of the characteristic that come to mind when looking at Georg Óskar's work. At a first glance, his paintings radiate a sense of innocence and silly cartoonish fun, while, at a second look, they are incredibly sarcastic and disturbing: Donald Duck (i.e. "Donald Junk") with a needle in his arm, Superman with his pants down, a freakish Mickey yelling "Scheisse" - one immediately recognises the heroes of one's childhood in their main features. Their dress and colours mostly match the original as well, but then their behaviour is disturbingly off.

A large part of Óskar's world is filled with repressed alcoholics, drug addicts, and orgiastic characters. They are tragic, often sad figures representing an uncontrolled, dark side of the human condition. His scenes lay bare unfulfilled dreams, peculiar wishes, and unspeakable emotional chaos. While popular cartoon figures generally express the ambivalence of the human mind - Donald, Mickey, Batman, Superman etc. have never been ca-



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refree! - Óskar's characters take a step further into the dark deep ends of existence. Topics like addiction, suicide, tribalism, and even racism are prominent across his work. Bizarre anonymous figures in a Ku-Klux-Klan hoodie-look pop up constantly, engaged in orgiastic activities or as a creepy voyeurs in the background ("The Bathers", 2017). These costumed characters, paired with the crooked counterparts of Disney's favourite cartoon-protagonists, appear as metaphorical figures, reflecting a kaleidoscope of all possible human shallows.

Óskar's portraits of friends and family figures are much less grim, yet also endowed with an ambivalent finnish humor. They give clues into his perception and personal observation of daily life in his native country Iceland or his recent home Berlin. According to Óskar, his paintings stem from an urge for self-expression, exploring the boundaries and the thin balance between good and evil, contentment and longing, self-containment and loss of control. In this sense, his work is to be regarded as an inner dialogue, a visual diary of both personal thoughts and non-personal subject matter.

Óskar's drawings and paintings are technically rooted in an eclectic mix of references to both popular culture and the "high" canon of art history - classical themes such as The Bathers or The Dance ("Mikki Matisse", 2019) reoccur in his work and are transformed within Óskar's typically sinister and humoresque aesthetic language. He regards himself as a "painterly painter", who has found inspiration in the classics of Expressionist figurative painting, but also in the work of Icelandic artists, such as Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval, whose murky palette he seems to have adopted, or the abstract painter Jón Óskar, who occasionally uses elements of popular culture as well.

Accordingly, Óskar's characters and scenes border on the abstract, always leaving lots of room to the imagination and never depicting a linear story. In the characteristic Expressionist manner, his working process is intuitive, swift, and often violent. The work "Confusion, then death" (2020) was created with several layers of spray paint, acrylic, and oil, which were destroyed and then applied again and again until, as Óskar says, "Mikki finally felt right". The continuous laborious process of creating and destruction mirrors his quest for clarity of mind. Óskar then often uses the titles of his paintings as additional thematic layers that give hints to interpretation. His almost compulsive attraction to the dark sides of life and his work towards sel-



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f-consciousness are reflected in his poetry as well. Occasionally, he writes on his pieces directly in order to capture certain feelings or to ask questions that offer further food for thought.

Book Details

Catalogue for the exhibition held at Migrant Bird Space Berlin, September-November 2020. The catalogue includes two articles, by Eva Morawietz and Kirsitian Skylstad, eleven poems by the artist, 98 images of art works, and 3 works from the artist's studio. Both articles are provided in an English and Chinese version.

Title: Your Dream is dead

Artist: Georg Óskar Gianakoudakis

Editor: Lu Mei Authors: Eva Morawietz, Kristian Skylstad

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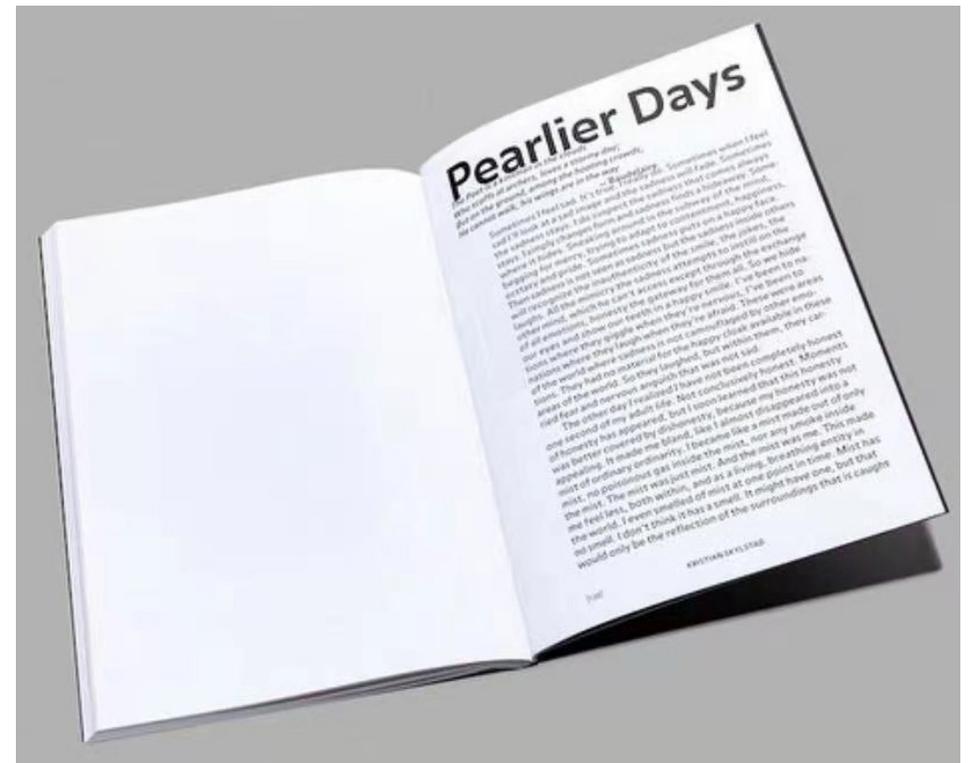
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Migrant
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Space

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Contacts

Migrant Bird Space is a Berlin & Beijing-based art foundation and gallery, providing a showcase for artists as well as art agency services in China & Europe. Working out of the gallery space at Koppenplatz in the heart of Berlin, the foundation offers a professional platform for cross-cultural communication between China and Europe with a focus on contemporary Chinese art. Promoting both established and emerging artists, Migrant Birds provides gallery spaces for exhibitions in Beijing and Berlin, an artist-in-residence program, regular talks and lectures, as well as support in liaising with Museums, universities, private institutions and more.

*Koppenplatz 5
10115 Berlin*

*Tue-Sat 1-6 pm
+49 (0)30 49952524*

Lu Mei 卢玫

Founder & Director

Germany: +49 176 3155 3507

China: +86 136 8113 7403

lumei@migrantbirdspace.com

www.migrantbirdspace.com

Office:

mail@migrantbirdspace.com