

KUNSTVEREIN GARTENHAUS

8 May – 26 Jun 2021

ÖZGÜR KAR MACABRE

Özgür Kar's (b.1992, TR) black and white video animations feature anthropomorphic characters, delivering contemporary tales poised between desire, melancholy, and loneliness. Trapped into the confined frame of flat screens, Kar's figures whisper pulp monologues of tragedy and homoeroticism. Sorrowfully humoristic, these figures are often depicted in portrait format — as the screen of tablets and smart-phones — or constrained in intricate positions. Sketched out as white lines on black backgrounds, the slow-moving alter-egos unfold an emotional complexity through long soliloquies. The cerebral tones of Samuel Beckett, observing essential elements of the human condition in dark humorous ways, and Lotte Reiniger's silhouette animated tales, enhancing facial expressions to express emotions or actions, come to mind. Rooting his influences in a variety of genres such as experimental theatre, European and Turkish folklore, early 20-century animation films as well as 1990's MTV cartoons, Kar accumulates diverse sources to represent the shift in digital consumption, imagined as a cacophonous experience inducing confrontation.

Premiering the program of KUNSTVEREIN GARTENHAUS, and conceived especially for its space, *MACABRE* presents a new video and sound installation by the artist.

Imagined as a theatre play performed by two characters, Death—a simulacrum amply diffused in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages — and a young boy playing the clarinet, words entangle to deep notes transposing the viewer at the center of the scene. There is a sacred feeling, the light is soft, the sound, a dark variation of the forbidden Devil's interval, is unsettling and surprising. Both characters are lazily lying supine, resting, perhaps disheartened.

Rather than manifesting only in our final moments — as Ingmar Bergman's iconic character playing an existential game of chess in the *Seventh Seal* (1957)—Death here is a constant presence embodying the infinite stream of news coverage, posting and re-posting, social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. An accompanying white noise we became overly-familiar with.

High and low, sarcasm and truth. *"Isn't it all a matter of life and death? But maybe it is a matter of how far death is allowed into your life."* wonders Death. Here transformation happens for the emancipated spectator, exposed to the affecting experience produced by Kar. Employing imaginary tales as a tool to explore our current historical moment of intense crisis and political polarization, Kar presents a loopy dimension of self-inquiry inviting the viewer to a moment of emotional and factual consciousness.

Özgür Kar

(b. 1992, Ankara, Turkey) lives and works in Amsterdam. He is a graduate from Gerrit Rietveld Academie and currently a resident at Rijksakademie van Beeldende kunsten (2019 – 2021). Recent solo exhibitions include: *A Decade of Submission*, Édouard Montassut (2020); *Exposed*, public space installation at Europarådets plass, Oslo (2019); *A New Start*, UKS, Oslo (2019); *Finally you are in me*, Taylor Macklin, Zurich (2018). Recent group exhibitions and screenings include: *Anticorps*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2020); *Sâr Dubnotal* at CAC Brétigny, (2020); *Noise!*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (2018); *Cruising Pavilion*, 16th Venice Architecture Biennale (2018); *Mene Mene Tekel Parsin*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2017), and *Ugly Feelings*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017). Kar is the winner of the thirteenth Volkskrant Visual Arts Prize 2020, and has a forthcoming solo exhibition at Foundation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2021).
ozgurkar.com

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List of works

- 1 *Snake Charmer* (2021)
3 channel 4K video with sound
20 mins loop
3 65" Samsung TVs, BrightSign media
players, wall mounts, speaker, amplifier
- 2 *Death* (2021)
3 channel 4K video with sound
20 mins loop
3 65" Samsung TVs, BrightSign media
players, wall mounts, speaker, amplifier

