

Rob Kulisek

Meg at Paracelsus

VI, VII, Oslo

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Press Releases

VI, VII is pleased to present Meg at Paracelsus, a solo exhibition by Paris-based artist Rob Kulisek. The exhibition is centered around works produced over a two-year period and combines photography with a publication.

The series features Meg Princess Superstar,¹ a local New York icon who brings the indie sleaze “up to date.” Wet fur, damaged Chanel matelassé, Marlboro light and black pinot are the accessories of this Edie Segwick of the 21st century. After a few inebriated adventures, our “neo Cory Kennedy” had to go to a private recovery clinic in Zurich, the Swiss citadel of the wealthy. In this exclusive rehab center dedicated to Carl Gustav Jung with no public address, Meg will enter a purgatory in which she will be examined by a plethora of specialists. A Chairman (CEO), a medical director, a clinical coordinator, a psychologist, a psychotherapist, an orthomolecularist, a personal trainer, a nutritionist, a counselor, and a yoga instructor will successively take care of this dark angel. In letting Meg cross the divine threshold of this uber-chic-clinic, little did the medical board know that they organized the collapse between two cultures: the ravaged sick and toxic New York underworld with the protestant and hygienic serenity of Switzerland, always maintained at an optimal temperature of 24,2 degree Celsius.

Bentley on call, personal chefs, and amazing views of lake Zurich: the Paracelsus clinic costs upwards of \$100,000 (approximately 1.000.000 Norwegian Kroner) a week and is ultimately a strange paradise which caters to the most secretive addicts in the world. In this anti-chamber of addiction culture, everyone can be saved from the needle park, as their motto says. First published in the inaugural issue of the independent magazine “The Opioid Crisis Lookbook,” founded by Dustin Cauchi and Dasha Zaharova, this series of pictures were contextualized during the magazine’s launch in a scenography that recalled William Friedkin’s movie Bug. Aluminum foil wrapped and mosquito zapper lit, the space imitated the Feng Shui

¹ Meg Yates or “Meg Princess Superstar,” a New York muse, disseminates her hipster ethos aesthetic both visually on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/megsuperstarprincess/?hl=fr>) and as a neo-downtown poet and diarist via her blogspot <https://lehipsterportal.blogspot.com/>

VI, VII
Operagata 75A
N-0194 Oslo, Norway

office@vivii.no
+47 902 79 862
www.vivii.no

dementia of the meth couple from the film.
“If every face is a landscape, Rob Kulisek’s palimpsests feel like a gardening session à la Robert Oppenheimer” the magazine would say at the time.

With late skype sessions and collages as his weapons of choice, Kulisek proceeded to a total mise-en-scène from his computer in Paris. Starting just a few weeks before Covid and after the location scouting of the rehab center in Zurich, he directed his friend and model Meg Princess Superstar in her apartment in New York. The images were then superimposed on found material creating these multilayered compositions. Thirteen portraits of the Paracelsus medical staff have been created and two frescos using a palimpsest logic have emerged for this specific show at VI, VII.

Our antiheroine du jour Meg is also anything but trivial. Her clothing style, her poses but also her blog mimic the hipster ethos of the late 2000’s: American Apparel meets Myspace meets Subprime crisis. Too recent to be totally digested and old enough to be exotic, this aesthetic creates a début de siècle confusion typical of our age of rapid stylistic versatility. Rob’s cursed images act also as the pastiche of a heroin chic editorial. But beyond the ghosts of 90’s photographer Davide Sorrenti and Kate Moss’ baby face in a Calvin Klein ad campaign, this work has in sight the Calvinist virtue and its claim to purity, both moral and carnal. Rob Kulisek reveals the cohort of chimeras and boogiemens that populates the medical panopticon that are recovery clinics. Yes, in Paracelsus too the night can get scary.

Pierre-Alexandre Mateos and Charles Teysou