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“LYNCH MEETS DISNEY”: THE FUNNY AND GROTESQUE VISION OF PAUL PRETZER

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Paul Pretzer, *All The Pleasure And All The Pain*, 2016, Oil on Canvas, 47 x 39 inches / 120 x 100 cm

Combining [Vanitas](#) motifs, Surrealist elements and fairytale themes, Germany-based painter Paul Pretzer creates images that are largely free of definite meanings. “They don’t want to be anything,” he points out, “but can be everything.” [“Lynch Meets Disney”](#) – says the artist, is a good way of making sense of his work.

Symbols of death, decay and decadence – flies, skeletons, liquor, meat – co-exist with bunnies, teddy bears and other hybrid creatures, stuff out of children’s stories. This juxtaposition results in a strange dark imagery that often tries to reconcile opposite phenomenon, for instance,

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pleasure and pain. The absurd melange both irritates and amuses. It is “something between disgusting, pitiable and a little funny”, the artist asserts.

“I basically just walk through the world with open eyes and collect impressions and in the end I combine elements from my inner archive to create something new out of it,” writes Paul. “For me it’s important to paint a good painting in terms of composition and colour on the one hand and to create an image that evokes and emotional reaction on the other hand. It is like juggling with different elements at the same time and keep them all in motion without letting them fall apart.” “My influences come from all over the place,” Paul continues. “As painters of form, I like Francis Bacon, Max Beckmann, Karl Hofer, Philip Guston and Giorgio Morandi. Bosch and Bruegel I admire for their imagination and the psychological impact of their paintings. [Japanese Woodcuts](#) are amazing because of their incredible ability of reducing everything down to the minimum. These masters found the essence of the form, I love the clarity and simplicity in these works.

“As far as film directors are concerned, I like Roy Anderson and Wes Anderson. They both are very good in composing every scene like a painting and have a great sense how to create complex and weird characters. Then, I read a lot of Russian literature, especially Gogol and Bulgakov. Especially [A Dog’s Heart](#) by Bulgakov left a very deep impression on me. In photography, I like [Martin Parr’s](#) work a lot because he shows in a very unvarnished way people as disgusting and pitiable creatures.”

Paul Pretzer was born in 1981 in Paide, Estonia, and moved with his parents to West Germany in 1988. He attended Muthesius Kunsthochschule (Kiel) and Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Dresden). Paul is currently an artist-in-residence at Listhus in Ólafsfjörður, Iceland.

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