



## Paradise in Transition

Starsky Brines / Björn Drenkwitz / Jonny Green / Florian Heinke /  
Dimitri Horta / Sam Jackson / Carolein Smit / José Vivenes

Exhibition Catalogue



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## *Paradise in Transition*

Starsky Brines / Björn Drenkwitz / Jonny Green / Florian Heinke / Dimitri Horta /  
Sam Jackson / Carolein Smit / José Vivenes

19th June 2020 - 31st August 2020

In the exhibition “Paradise in Transition” we present works by eight artists from Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland and Venezuela, who interpret the change of the idea of the paradise in very different ways - some of them very humorous. The diversity of approaches alone shows the complexity of the subject matter. This is underlined by the fact that, after the experiences of the past few months, we are now looking at these works with different eyes.

Since its creation, the idea of paradise has been closely linked to the idea of loss and longing and the striving for an ideal world. An idea that has not only been handed down through the writings, but has also been pictorially spread by artists. To this day the longing for paradise is deeply rooted in human society and finds its way into the fine arts over and over again.

In these days, artists have increasingly detached themselves from the historical and biblical depictions, paradise is increasingly becoming a place of longing, where the alienation of people is being reversed by the industrialization of the world.

At the same time, the Garden of Eden is not always associated with the utopia of a healed world. The Fall of Man is also a further central theme of the artistic examination of paradise. Especially since the 20th century, the loss of this ideal place has been associated with human misconduct. It becomes clear that the changing ideas of paradise are also based on political and social developments.

Since its creation, the idea of Elysium has been closely linked to the idea of the inner paradise. In times of crisis this is often associated with the withdrawal into the inner self, but at the same time the “paradise within me” is often associated with dream images, hidden longings and desires.

The idea of paradise was and is always dependent on the individual life situation of the observer and the social context in which he/she moves, so that the reception of representations of paradise is also constantly changing. This is what makes the exhibition so exciting at the moment.

## Starsky Brines

Born 1977, Caracas, Venezuela

Lives and works in Miami, Florida, USA

Starsky Brines' paintings and drawings captivate with their unmistakable style and a recurring theme, the search for the essence of being human. In his works, the artist focuses on characters that emerge from the combination of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic features and the appropriation of elements from comics and toys from his childhood. These characters distort reality and move both in an environment of subcultures and urbanism and in a sphere of fantasy. Especially those animal creatures with human characteristics recall the world of the theatre, in which fantasy and poetry, but also comedy, often serve as catalysts of critical meaning. The idea of the 'lost paradise' runs through his work like a red thread, for him it is always connected with the imbalances of society.

Art historically influenced by the Latin American figurative art, German Neo-Expressionism, the Italian Transavantgarde and the COBRA - group, his works oscillate between figuration and abstraction. His works have received international attention in exhibitions and can be found in important collections worldwide.





Starsky Brines  
Smelling, 2020  
Mixed media on canvas  
135 x 125 cm



Starsky Brines  
Caleidoscopio  
Mixed media on paper  
73 x 58 cm



Starsky Brines  
Dejate querer  
Mixed media on paper  
76 x 56 cm



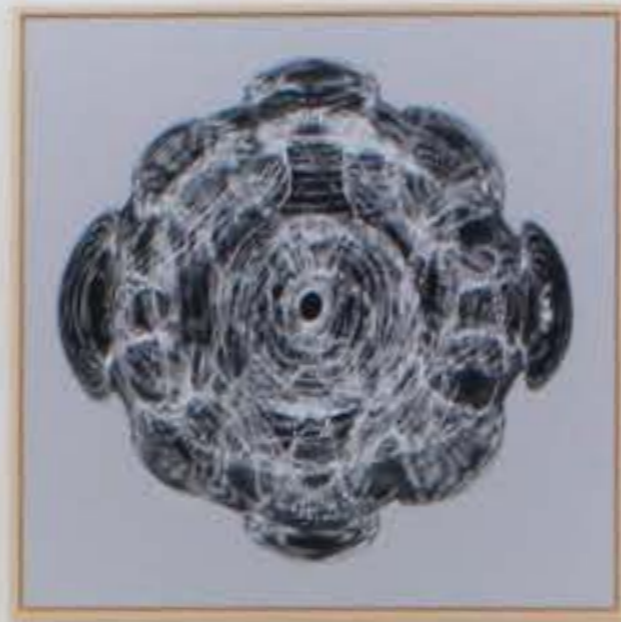
## Björn Drenkwitz

Born 1978 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Lives and works in Frankfurt am Main, Germany

The two-part work *First Cry / Last Breath* shows sound recordings that Björn Drenkwitz visualized by means of a scientific method - cymascopy. In this process, an audio recording is played into a liquid medium, which is thereby set into vibration. This vibrations are recorded by a high-resolution camera. The two pictures shown here were taken from the sound recordings of the first cry of a newborn baby and the last breath of a dying man. Behind it is the attempt to depict the unfathomable, life and death. The two most essential moments in the life of a human being seem to be brought closer together by the similarities of the images. Between them stands a whole life. Björn Drenkwitz (born 1978) studied media art at the Kunsthochschule Mainz and at the Kunsthochschule für Medien, Cologne with Prof. Dieter Kiessling and Prof. Mischa Kuball from 2003 to 2010. Participation in numerous national and international exhibitions and video festivals. He teaches at the Kunsthochschule Mainz







Björn Drenkwitz  
First Cry, 2020  
Cymatik C-Print  
100 x 100 cm



Björn Drenkwitz  
Last Breath, 2020  
Cymatik C-Print  
100 x 100 cm



## Jonny Green

Born 1966 in Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Lives and works in London and Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Jonny Green's most recent series of paintings takes up the absurdity, exaggerated theatricality and comedy of the late baroque and rococo periods. Seen through the filter of the contemporary gaze, such works appear to us as highly kitschy psychedelic extravaganzas. Clouds turn into grinning cats and soft pastels become acid pink and hissing, fluorescent green. All naturalism has disappeared. The artist has allowed himself to freely associate in these works. Goddesses and angels appear as hung-over partygoers and chubby flying babies, rainbows appear indiscriminately everywhere, both as a formal means and as an indication of the synaesthetic mixing of the senses that a person experiences at the end of an LSD trip. Associations with John Milton's epic poem "Lost Paradise", which tells of the angels' fall from hell, the fall of sin and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden come to mind as well as the thought that in the end they are also images of a search for an unknown paradise. The skilful use of the oil paint in these new paintings has a looseness and freedom that has echoes of both Rubens and Tiepolo, without ever succumbing to a kind of nostalgia. The story is treated here like a treasure chest, which playfully is plundered and admired. As a painter and musician he has travelled the world and has presented his practice in numerous exhibitions and concerts. Green lives and works in Yorkshire and London.





Jonny Green  
**Band Practice, 2020**  
Oil on linen on cardboard  
50 x 56 cm





Jonny Green  
The Drunk Tank, 2020  
Oil on paper on cardboard  
53 x 38 cm



Jonny Green  
Coronation of the Covid King, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
25 x 20 cm



Jonny Green  
All Hail the Covid King, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
25 x 20 cm



## Florian Heinke

Born 1981 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Lives and works in Frankfurt am Main, Germany

We show in addition to one work from his black period, now for the first time his colored works. As with his “Black Paintings”, Heinke creates images with his new, colour-intensive series that can be understood as “manifestos of the inner being”. As Christiane Stark wrote in her essay “Das überreife Eden oder Der ewige Krieg”, “in Heinke’s work, movements of the classical avantgarde converge without repeating them. Also with his new landscape paintings, in which powerful colors dominate and in which their expressive charge are reminiscent of paintings of the Blaue Reiter Heinke continues to develop his own visual language, with which he remains true to himself and his desire to treat the fundamental questions of humanity “in a non-scientific way” with his pictures. For Heinke, art is “a social mirror and thus a refuge of truth”. And so he also shows us with his new pictures “that civilization and culture are the icing on the cake of the raw and wild of our existence”. Already close under the “earth’s crust” of his pictures “bubbles the magma” and shows that cruelty reigns in the idyll of nature. Heinke’s works can be found in prominent collections in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and the USA.





Florian Heinke  
Im Ende des Sommers, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
180 x 150 cm





Florian Heinke  
**God is family, 2020**  
Oil on canvas  
70 x 50 cm



Florian Heinke  
**Sonntag Nacht, 2019**  
Oil on canvas  
50 x 60 cm

## Dimitri Horta

Born 1970 in Lausanne, Switzerland  
Lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland

The Swiss artist Dimitri Horta belongs to a younger generation of indicative artists whose expression is based on the Surrealism of the 1930s. His paintings in this series tell absurd, humorous stories and draw poetically from mythology. The technical parallels to Francis Picabia's painting style are obvious in Horta's works, but he has given them a characteristic finish: He resins them, a process that gives the paintings a remarkable texture.

Horta's surreal pictures often unfold a Dionysian power. Surfaces, ornaments and symbols of the purest colours revolve in a constant whirl around themselves. Everything is in motion, nothing stands still. The figures and hybrid beings draw the viewer into the picture, luring him into their surreal world of signs. Driven by the question of the essence of being human, he explores the vague, elusive aspects of human existence, often disturbing the viewer by the lack of a safe ground.







Dimitri Horta  
Songbird im Paradise, 2019  
Mixed media on fabric on wood  
180 x 240 cm



Dimirtri Horta  
Covid 19, Paradise Lost, 2011 - 2020  
Oil on canvas  
22,4 x 20,2 cm



Dimirtri Horta  
Covid 19, Paradise Lost, 2011 - 2020  
Oil on canvas  
22,4 x 20,2 cm



Dimitri Horta  
Covid 19, Paradise Lost, 2011 - 2020  
Oil on canvas  
22,4 x 20,2 cm



## Sam Jackson

Born 1977 in London, Great Britain

Lives and works in London, Great Britain

In Sam Jackson's latest series "Chronicles", a series of color portraits, the past or rather time plays a key role. Jackson's subjects often seem historical, as if from another era, but personal stories or memories predominate in these pictures.

They tell of a lost paradise, which in the end was never a reality for those portrayed. His texts and signs integrated into the painting refer to a different reality. They tell of desires and inner dialogues and at the same time force us to deal with our own inner world. Across generations, times and places these images show us that the search for the "paradise within me" is an exciting one, but can also be a painful process.

Sam Jackson studied at Middlesex University, London (2000-2003) and City and the Royal Academy Schools, London (2004-2007). His works are represented in important collections in Germany, Europe and the USA.





Sam Jackson  
**It Is Not Because Of Anything I've Done, But Because  
Of Everything You Are, 2019**  
Oil, marker, pen and spraypaint on cardboard  
32 x 22,5 cm



Sam Jackson  
**Her Whole Person, Her Whole Being, Was Concentrated  
There, And Compassion Wrung My Heart, 2019**  
Oil, marker and pen on cardboard  
32 x 22,5 cm

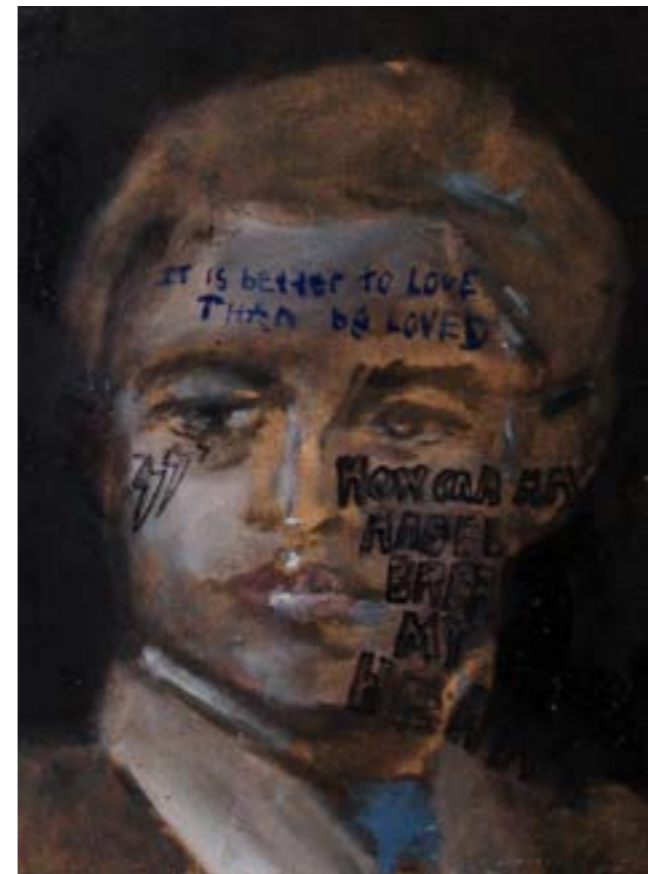


Sam Jackson  
To Love And Be Loved, 2018  
Oil on cardboard  
21 x 19 cm



Sam Jackson  
Run To Me, 2017  
Oil on cardboard  
20 x 18 cm





Sam Jackson  
How can an Angel Break my Heart, 2016  
Oil on cardboard  
22 x 16,5 cm



Sam Jackson  
Myth and History, 2015  
Oil on cardboard  
15 x 9.5 cm

## Carolein Smit

Born 1960 in Amersfoort, The Netherlands  
Lives and works in Zussen, Belgium

In her ceramic sculptures the Belgian artist Carolein Smit satirically plays with that unknown turning point where beauty is transformed into exuberance, hate into love, alienation into enlightenment and unresolved emotions into overactive feeling. Smit takes up themes from classical mythology and biblical tales, such as greed, power and impotence, vanity, transience and death, but with a touch of irony.

Carolein Smit studied at the Academy of Art and Design St. Joost in Breda / Netherlands from 1979 to 1984. Smit has enjoyed a great reputation in the Benelux countries for many years, and in 2010 a retrospective at the Kunsthalle Rotterdam was dedicated to her. In 2018 the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Grassi Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Leipzig and the Drents Museum in Assen showed her ceramics in solo exhibitions.







**Carolein Smit**  
**Perltränen, 2009**  
Ceramic  
59 x 60 x 50 cm





**Carolein Smit**  
**Vanitas, 2012/2013**  
Ceramic  
60 x 38 x 42 cm

## José Vivenes

Born 1977 in Maturín, Venezuela

Lives and works in Caracas, Venezuela

José Vivenes, who like Starsky Brines is one of the most important painters in Venezuela, visualizes with his work the social tensions of today. He often uses motifs, symbols and historical events in order to address the contradictions of human existence on a “literary” level. Like Jonny Green, he draws on Milton’s image of the infernal fall of fallen angels, which appear over and over again in his pictures.

The expulsion from paradise by the human fall is thematized in his images in various ways. The pig appears often as a symbol, which in Christian mythology stands for gluttony, excess, ignorance and selfishness. He does not only refer to the human being as a sinner, but also questions the role of the state and the church in Venezuela. Vivenes is regarded in his country as an important artistic voice in the struggle for social justice perceived.





José Vivenes  
Lo verde devora los intersticios de formas a forma, penetra y penetra y abulta cada una, 2019  
Oil on canvas  
155 x 162 cm





José Vivenes  
Se Vuelve Sin Sentido, 2019  
Mixed media on paper  
70 x 50 cm

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