

## **Marie Aly & Matthias Dornfeld**

### *Cocktails and Horses*

14 April - 19 May 2018

Opening Reception: Saturday 14 April from 17:00 hours

In collaboration with - The Amazing Popping Eyes - Gerhard Hofland is proud to present *Cocktails and Horses*, a duo exhibition with paintings by Berlin-based artists Marie Aly (1980, DE) and Matthias Dornfeld (1960, DE). For both artists this is the first time they show work in the gallery.

Marie Aly and Matthias Dornfeld both practice a spontaneous and naïve form of painting, showing bright and colourful images that reveal a world filled with strange faces, fantastical figures, and dreamlike landscapes. These subjects do not appear as the result of intensive research or through pre-occupied positions of the artists and their intentions. Rather, both artists paint directly from the mind and for the sake of painting itself; the joy of directly putting that what is in the mind onto the canvas.

The paintings of Marie Aly are like dreams in which familiar faces appear all of a sudden. Painted in a way that almost resembled icons, they are both timeless and contemporary. At the same time, Aly juxtaposes the cultural or symbolic meaning of her subjects by integrating concepts and techniques from other times and places. This is however not a conceptual process. Rather, it stems from a sense of absolute painterly freedom for the artist. For Matthias Dornfeld, the duplicitous relationship between the timeless and the contemporary can be considered as the result of his direct and intuitive style of painting. The creatures that appear in his works have, in that sense, more in common with those in primordial cave-paintings than with more recent, rational forms of painting, and Dornfeld appears to have mastered the art of elevating his work beyond any direct discursive or art historical connotation, or rational approach.

The deliberate unlearning of painterly conventions and art historical discourses that echoes throughout the practices of Dornfeld and Aly does not just make them outsiders. Their paintings always contain something mystic precisely because they move beyond conventions, and come straight from the soul of the maker. Much like revealing a dream, this direct spontaneity also makes both artists' work vulnerable, as it has only itself to fall back on. On the other hand, their work reinstalls a welcome sense of joy and wonderment in painting, both in the act of making as well as in looking at it.