

Henrik Uldalen is back with a new solo exhibition: *Lethe*, breaking boundaries between past and present with works of astounding beauty

Lethe

13th December 2019- 11th January 2020



Henrik Uldalen
Studio Shot, 2019

“The Language in my body of work is subtle and still very much based on beauty...”

After internationally recognised artist Henrik Uldalen’s first solo exhibition captivated millions all over the world, JD Malat Gallery is proud to present the artist’s second solo exhibition, *Lethe*. One of the rare contemporary artists with almost one million followers on Instagram, his influence on social media is undeniable. Uldalen, also renowned for the thickly impastoed tumultuous portraits that illustrate the darker side of human emotion, has surpassed himself with a new body of work touching on themes of modern-day politics through his turmoiled figures.

Opening on the 13th December 2019 until 11th January 2020, the exhibition explores themes of history vs. the collective memory. In this exhibition, Uldalen raises questions about the past, and society’s eagerness to return to it, by talking about the frail social recollection of history. His aim is to shed light on past patterns leading to conflict and errors.

The current political landscape in the West has highly motivated Uldalen in this new series. ‘Seeing world leaders so loosely construct a narrative in order to change the values, behaviour and ideals of the public has scared me’. There is a strong presence of the colour pink in this exhibition which the artist has used as a metaphor for the rosy veil we place on

areas of our life we are uncomfortable with. 'The pink is a symbol of our minds' ability to cope with the past by fabricating a more comforting narrative'. Black inevitably appears through the surface, only partially covered by the pink.

Whereas his previous exhibition, *Metanoia*, was a look inwards, a way for the artist to cope with change and personal emancipation, *Lethe* takes a look outwards, reflecting on the world around the artist. His motivation and inspiration remain his creative desire and need to express himself, helping him function on a daily basis. He describes his work as 'expressionist in the language of a neo-classical painter'. He admits that he looks to film directors and other mediums more than painters.

The artist explains that people who relate to his works have a disposition to melancholy but that with these new paintings he hopes to touch a multitude of art lovers, all of which have a tendency towards beauty. His work takes form very intuitively with little to no planning. He describes his technique as a constant experiment with paints and solvents, a push and pull of movement combining the two mediums. He works in a layering process constantly adding paint to improve the surface of the canvas.

Porcelain vessels make an appearance in this exhibition which makes for an interesting and eye-opening interlude. The vessels contain symbolic water from the river Lethe, the river of forgetfulness and oblivion in Greek Mythology. The porcelain stands strong in a group where they support each other, but separately they fall apart. The fragile nature of these vessels and the likelihood that they topple over and break mirrors the nationalist movements of the past. This also foreshadows events that might happen in the light of jingoism in the United States and the United Kingdom. At a time of uncertainty in Uldalen's home country what with Brexit indecisions transpiring through the nation, this sentiment feels particularly relevant.

Henrik Uldalen was born in South Korea in 1986 and subsequently raised in Norway. Before moving to England in 2015, Henrik also lived in Barcelona, Florence, and Mexico City. As a self-taught artist, Uldalen's work focuses on the darker side of life through emotive realistic portraits abstracted by colour and form, creating immensely textured pieces. This new exhibition is very much based on his past experiences, it is an accumulation of ideas and experiences that have formed his body of the work. Art is the means through which he can process feelings and emotions, enabling him to cope with events and changes in his life. The artist belongs to many important collections worldwide.

For interviews, images and comment, please contact:
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Exhibition Opening Hours

Monday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

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